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The Shape of Things

IF YOU PRETEND A STRIKE ISN'T THERE, WILL it go away? For seventeen weeks now—115 days, as this issue appears—40,000 C. I. O. shipworkers have been conducting a "work stoppage" against three major shipbuilding corporations headed up by Bethlehem Steel. Yet one would hardly be able to learn of the event from the American press. For reasons not altogether clear, but apparently as a courtesy to the procurement agencies of the Navy Department and the Maritime Commission, an almost complete news blackout has been dropped over the nation's biggest current strike. Almost complete, but not quite: in full-page advertisements, Bethlehem has informed the public that shipyard workers are paid too much. What of the union claim that it was forced into the stoppage by the intransigence, arrogance, and deliberate maneuvers of management? What of the claim that Bethlehem, as long ago as the Congressional elections, saw an opportunity to break a union under the statutes which a reactionary Congress was certain to provide? What of the claim that the corporations have boycotted all meetings, since June, of the Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee —a tripartite board of union, management, and government representatives, set up by the government during the war and still in being for the duration of the national emergency? And the claim that, in so doing, the employers have abrogated a contract with the government? These are all valid questions, but they are to be found only in the strike bulletins of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, and in the union's letters to President Truman —all, as yet, unanswered. We shall try to dig deeper into these questions in a full report on the strike in an early issue. Meanwhile, we wish to call the attention of readers to the fact that the strike is a reality and a bitter one, complete with company scabs and hostile police. Seventeen weeks is a long time, and winter is just around the corner.

*

THE HERALDED OVERHAULING OF THE British Cabinet has come and gone, with political consequences hardly visible to the naked eye. The New York *Times* editorially professes to see in the shift another instance of revolution devouring its children, but this seems an unnecessarily lurid way to describe a shake-up that leaves a government slightly more youthful, administratively stronger, and politically exactly where it was. In a sense, some of the eleven veterans who were dropped or demoted were holding their portfolios only in order to give the younger men of the Labor Party an opportunity for seasoning. The one shift of consequence was the ousting of Emanuel Shinwell from the Fuel and Power Ministry, and, left-winger though he is, the devouring of this child of the revolution consisted merely in transferring him to the non-Cabinet post of Secretary of State for War. Among the rising stars in the Labor galaxy are Hugh Gaitskill, a professor of economics, who succeeds the peppery Mr. Shinwell; James Harold Wilson, who, at thirty-one, steps in as president of the Board of Trade and right-hand man to Sir Stafford Cripps, the newly installed and extremely powerful Minister for Economic Affairs; and George R. Strauss, succeeding John Wilmot as Minister of Supply. Bevin, Morrison, Bevan, and Strachey remain firmly fixed in their posts, and the Labor Party remains firmly fixed in the saddle. The Tories, in convention assembled, have seen fit to indorse the nationalization achieved to date, and even the *Wall Street Journal's* London correspondent advises his readers that Britain's difficulties have not been "due to the policy of nationalization." In fact, that paper begins to suspect that, revolution or no revolution, the British once more show signs of "muddling through."

*

EAST-WEST TRADE IN EUROPE IS BOUND TO increase, in the opinion of William L. Clayton, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, who has just returned from a trip to the Continent. In a press interview, Clayton said that while the revival of the Comintern might deepen the political division of Europe, no insurmountable trade barrier could be erected as long as there was peace. He insisted he did not want to be drawn into any sort of political discussion, but as an economist felt obliged to point out that once a normal rate of production is reached, commercial relations between the East and West are inevitable since their economies are largely complementary. Clayton's commonsense appraisal may help to restore the American sense of perspective. Even as commentators were predicting an irreparable split in Europe, the first shipload of Russian

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wheat arrived in an English port and Anglo-Russian trade negotiations were about to be renewed. Across the Channel, the French, who already have a pact with Poland, are negotiating agreements with several countries in the Soviet sphere of influence. Holland has opened trade talks with Yugoslavia. And there are reports of an impending French-Russian wheat deal. Whether in the Marshall or the Stalin zone, governments are too concerned about the needs of their people this winter to allow political obstacles to check the normal flow of goods. Increased trade between East and West will benefit not only the people of the Continent but the American taxpayers, who will have to shoulder the burden of the Marshall plan.

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REPRESENTATIVES HOFFMAN AND BUSBEY are men who burn at injustice—to Hoffman and Busbey. The quality is all the more striking in view of their indifference to injustices suffered by those second-class Americans who do not sit in Congress. At the moment, the two Representatives are at white heat because their names are included in a special security file of the Civil Service Commission, a list of uninvestigated but possibly subversive individuals who might some day apply for government jobs. Like victims of their own House Un-American Affairs Committee, these gentlemen complain of "Gestapo tactics" and the technique of the "smear." We share their resentment. This sort of compilation, based on hearsay and unchecked evidence, has no place in the files of a government agency—or in the files of a Congressional committee. Had Messrs. Hoffman and Busbey asked that the entire file be destroyed, we think they could have made out a good case and served a good cause. Instead, they demanded only that Congressional names be removed. The commission, fearing for its appropriations, abjectly agreed, refusing only to let the Congressmen go through the files themselves. Its subservience does the country no favor and merely encourages these two little men in the belief that Congressmen are a race apart.

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THOSE WASHINGTON REPORTERS WHO CARRY lanterns must have thought they had come to the end of a trail the other day when they interviewed Rustem Vambery, Hungary's new minister to this country. For instead of resorting to the old diplomatic device of lying abroad for his country, Ambassador Vambery took the simple and refreshing tack of saying exactly what he thought about the present plight of Hungary—about the degree of influence exercised upon its government by Soviet Russia, about the percentage of purity in the recent election, about Hungary's prospects for the future. He said he thought Hungary was "more subservient than

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is necessary" to Russia but that it would be an overstatement to say that the Soviet Union controls Hungary. He said that the Russian army of occupation naturally has an influence on the mind of the country. He said it was "very unfortunate" that the leaders of the other parties are not as able as the Communist leaders. And so on. He said, finally—and here, we must admit, he made a shameless bow to the great American obsession—that Hungary should not be used as a baseball between the Yankees and the Dodgers! We doubt whether this interview will be picked up by Cholly Knickerbocker, society fancier for the Hearst press, who, a few days before Mr. Vambery was cordially received by President Truman, "reported" that Washington diplomats "are indignant because they'll now have to rub elbows with Rustem Vambery." He called Mr. Vambery a "noted Communist" and after telling another lie or two expressed sympathy again with "State Department regulars" who don't "cherish the idea of having to shake hands and sip tea with such riffraff." This is known as lying at home for one's publisher.

*

SUSPENSION OF THE *PROGRESSIVE* IS ONE more indication that Wisconsin's vaunted liberalism is now hardly more than the shadow of a great past. In its final issue, the *Progressive's* editor, Morris Rubin, writes of having "fought a losing rear-guard action against the soaring costs of production." We know exactly what he means, and he would have our sympathy even if the *Progressive* had not been as valuable a paper as it was. Yet we cannot help thinking that the rear-guard action might have been successful had there been an army left to save. The tragic fact is that the Wisconsin that sends a McCarthy, a Wiley, and an O'Konski to Washington is simply not the Wisconsin of the La Follettes and Victor Berger. With the power of the La Follette family crumbled away and its following dispersed, it is not surprising that the paper founded by "Fighting Bob" in 1909 should at last give up the ghost. His sons bear a partial measure of responsibility for the collapse of a political institution. "Young Bob," for whom we have great respect, made a monumental blunder when he attempted last year to lead his supporters back into the corrupt and stodgy Republican Party of the state. And Brother Phil, who was once a good governor, has followed an erratic course that has brought him at last to an understanding with Colonel McCormick, based on a common reverence for General MacArthur. In spite of the La Follette wanderings, the *Progressive* itself has for thirty-eight years steered a course of political courage and decency. We often found ourselves in strong disagreement with its policies, particularly its unrelenting isolationism in the pre-war years, but we have never questioned its integrity or its allegiance to the tenets of the liberal faith.

Now the Trouble Starts

THE hullabaloo over the Communist-affidavit issue, settled—more or less—by a National Labor Relations Board ruling last week, was important less for itself than for the false hopes it aroused and the dark augury it contained. Too many people looked at its solution as the end of a great log jam. Too few reflected on the possibility that if such racket, consternation, and dissent could be caused by a two-bit, immaterial question, sheer chaos would ensue when the board arrived at the really substantive and much more difficult problems ahead of it in interpreting the turbid law under which it operates.

The dispute was of the how-many-angels genre, applicable to some two or three dozen top officials of the C. I. O. and A. F. of L. Did every member of the A. F. of L. Executive Council have to swear he was not a Communist before any component union of the A. F. of L. could avail itself of the processes of the new law and of the help, if any, of the NLRB? Or was it sufficient for each union if only that union's officers executed the affidavits? It was clear that the drafters of the law had not given the question any thought; some of them admitted as much. It is probable that if Robert N. Denham, general counsel of the NLRB, had ignored the matter and had promulgated the more limited interpretation, no one would have noticed that there was a possibility of a different point of view. Instead, he chose to read the law the hard way, and said so. This played neatly into the hands of John L. Lewis, never a fellow to miss a chance.

Lewis had announced that he considered signing the oath *infra dig*. This would have been a statement of momentous non-importance, because the United Mine Workers' Union has no need to use the new law. But Denham's interpretation rocketed Lewis into a key position—something that has never made him unhappy—for as long as he remained a hold-out, he blocked all the rest of the A. F. of L. from access to the NLRB.

For reasons that defy common-sense explanation, the board stewed without action for five weeks, while Lewis paddled happily in a pond made to his own specifications. Once again he was the big shot, making political capital in the A. F. of L. while building up his prestige among left-wing elements of the C. I. O.

Finally, in fourteen closely typed pages, with arguments which would have been a credit to any scholastic monk, four members of the board told why their reading of the law differed from Denham's, and the fifth member, J. Copeland Gray, explained why Denham was right. As the newspapers say, Denham thereupon bowed to the will of the majority. He said he would not challenge the ruling, as he might have done, through a court

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proceeding. Senator Ball, who had previously said that Denham's interpretation was the correct one, intimated that the board majority was perfectly right.

Lewis has come out victor in a battle he could not have lost. He has proved himself a tough, trade-union hero, courageous in splendid isolation. The first to engage in a fight on a concrete issue with the new villain, he succeeded in having Denham's ears pinned back, even though he himself suffered a slight casualty when the federation dropped all its vice-presidents. This was necessary because even the board's ruling did not solve the problem of the affidavit in the case of federal unions, chartered directly by the top A. F. of L. body.

With the issue settled, there has been much jubilation, particularly in trade-union circles and even among officials of the NLRB, who should know better. It is felt that now the cases can pour in, the unions can have access to the board, and somehow everything will go back to the happy days of the Wagner act. The cases may, indeed, come pouring in. But the result will be only to bring to the surface disputes over innumerable other sections of the act, sections infinitely more complicated and, in distinction with this first unreal controversy, of solid weight and significance. Solution of the Communist-affidavit question does not end the difficulty with the law; it merely permits the trouble to begin.

The New "Comintern"

THE most significant point in the manifesto which accompanied and justified the revival of the Comintern has, it seems to us, been missed by most of the commentators. Primarily, that farrago of bellicose clichés has been interpreted as an open challenge to the United States, and, of course, the manner in which it assailed American "imperialism" gave plenty of color to that idea. But, after all, this merely added superfluous emphasis to a position that Moscow had already made abundantly clear. A much more striking feature of the manifesto was its all-out assault on Western socialism. Not only Bevin—an old enemy—but Attlee, Blum, Saragat, Schumacher, and other moderate or right-wing Socialist leaders were branded as traitors to the working class and to their countries as well. They are men who "are facilitating the task of American capital and are pushing their countries along the road of vassal dependency on the United States."

We are back again, apparently, to the phraseology of the early thirties, when "social fascist" was the orthodox Communist epithet for British Laborites and Continental Social Democrats. But with this difference: then, the emphasis was on class loyalty; now, the Communist parties claim that they are the true patriots, the only safe guardians of "national independence and sovereignty."

This attempt to discredit a large part of Western socialism obviously means the abandonment of the popular-front strategy which Moscow had pursued since the rise of Nazism, except during the Soviet-German-pact interlude. The manifesto reads like a declaration of open warfare against those Socialist parties which are not willing to cooperate wholeheartedly with the Communists. Spearheading the fight will be the powerful French and Italian parties, the only Western ones invited to participate in the initial meeting of the new Information Bureau. They have reasonable hopes of success, for in both countries they have a strong grip on the trade unions and the Italian Socialists are badly split.

The struggle against the Socialists and the anti-Marshall-plan campaign are closely connected. In France, the government, under Socialist leadership, has been forced to base its plans for recovery on the prospect of further American aid. If that aid fails to arrive, or if its effectiveness is reduced by widespread strikes, the government will fall and the Socialists be discredited. That might mean a bid for power by De Gaulle and the creation of a revolutionary situation in which the French would be confronted with a hard choice between communism and reaction. The Italians are already dangerously close to being forced to decide on one or the other of those alternatives.

The Soviet leaders have fully convinced themselves that recovery in Western Europe under American auspices would be dangerous to their security. In so far as they mean by that the physical security of the Soviet Union, we think they are wrong. But they may be right in spotting an ideological danger. If Western Europe is able to struggle to its feet and its Socialist governments are given an opportunity to develop their programs, they may prove a very disturbing influence on the rulers of the Kremlin.

On the other hand, it is a fact that American financial power may be used—through or apart from the Marshall plan—to back the interests of Europe's surviving economic royalists against the steady encroachments of Socialist strength. Our policy in the Ruhr, as well as the attitude of leading American officials toward the nationalization program in Britain, indicate clearly enough the course Congress and the Administration may take, and it is no secret that European Socialists are almost as fearful of the consequences of American financial help as they are eager to have it. To the extent that dollars are used as a dyke to check socialism, the Marshall plan will serve to fortify the Communist attack on Socialists in Britain and on the Continent; a possibility American liberals must foresee and energetically combat.

The chief weakness of the Russians' position is that they really have no alternative to the Marshall plan to offer Western Europe. The Comintern manifesto boils

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down to an invitation to the people to live on slogans until such time as Russia itself may be in a position to supply wheat, coal, and oil in abundance. The chief hope of Moscow lies in timidity and muddled counsel in this country. There are powerful voices here, capitalist voices, that want to put aid to Europe on a soup-kitchen basis; there are others who want to use it as a means of defeating Socialist developments and who thus play directly into the hands of the Communist propagandists. The gravest danger to Western European recovery is not, as acting Secretary of State Robert M. Lovett suggested the other day, Communist sabotage; it is ignorance, indifference, and prejudice right here in America.

Palestine

WITH the statements last week by the United States and Russia, the Palestine issue moves into a new and much more hopeful phase. The majority recommendations of the United Nations Special Committee, favoring the division of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, now become the basis of further debate in the ad hoc committee; and it seems sure, as we go to press, that many wavering states will follow the Big Two in backing partition. If the two statements mean what they seem to mean, a decent solution can be reached. The chief remaining danger lies in the disagreements which may crop up during discussions of important details—delimitation of boundaries, methods of enforcement, and the issue created by Arab defiance. This last difficulty cannot be put off, for the Arab League, under the personal direction of the Mufti, not only refuses, in advance, to recognize a U. N. decision in support of the majority report, but is organizing armed resistance. However feeble such a demonstration may be, it constitutes a challenge the U. N. must meet—though it has evaded it for days while the Arab leaders shouted defiance and announced that troops had been "massed" along the Palestine frontier.

If the United States is serious in its stand on Palestine, Mr. Johnson should state clearly in the Assembly committee this country's determination to back its decision against Arab blackmail. Unless this is done, and done quickly, smaller powers will find it hard to believe we mean business. Besides demanding an end to armed threats, the United States should take action against the Mufti as the chief instigator and organizer of Arab violence. It was supposedly a member of the Mufti's "striking force" who bombed the American consulate in Jerusalem last Monday. It is the Mufti himself who directs Arab strategy from just across the border in Lebanon. This cruel, crafty agitator is an escaped prisoner of war. By every criterion laid down at Nürnberg, he is a war criminal. His domination of the Arab Higher Committee in Palestine and of the Arab League is resented by many Arab political leaders who will not oppose him openly, for fear of assassination—a fate less wary ones have already met. No better way could be devised of ending Arab defiance of the U. N., while at the same time appealing to those moderate Arabs whose voices have been silenced, than to demand that the Mufti be handed over for trial as a war criminal. This would prove to all concerned that the United States will not knuckle under to threats or to embryo "holy wars."

THE hope of a settlement in Palestine, of inestimable importance in itself, was almost overshadowed by the other implications of Russian-American agreement on the majority report. For Palestine is as central a factor in the struggle for power as any problem before the United Nations: strategy and oil, communications and political control, are inextricably tangled with the fate of Jewish hopes and Arab resistance. Palestine is one of the key "strong points" of the post-war world. And if Russia and the United States can not only accept a single formula but cooperate in carrying through a plan, peace will be established in the Middle East and the quaking foundations of the U. N. itself will be steadied. It is the presence of these overshadowing issues, on the other hand, that makes it essential for realistic Americans, while welcoming our government's position on Palestine, to follow closely every detail in the process of working out and applying the agreed program. Too often in the past—in the question of Spain, for example—apparent victories have been emptied of their meaning, and promises have crumbled into ineffective formulas. The test of our intentions in Palestine still lies ahead.

THE dinner of the Nation Associates could hardly have been held at a more opportune moment. Russia's clear-cut indorsement of the majority report had been announced that afternoon, and the speakers keyed their discussion to the developments at Lake Success. Sumner Welles, in particular, emphasized the point that common action on a specific issue might help break the deadlock in which all other major issues are caught; while Richard Crossman, Labor Member of Parliament and member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, who came from London to speak at the dinner, insisted on the need of lifting Palestine out of the power complex in the Middle East and converting it into that "political vacuum" so generally regarded as undesirable. The responsibility of the United States in bringing about a final decent solution was ably argued by Bartley Crum, also a member of the Anglo-American Committee. Next week, *The Nation* will publish Mr. Welles's remarks in full and, in later issues, excerpts from the rest of the discussion.

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Two-World Debate

BY J. KING GORDON

Lake Success, October 14

A MONTH or two ago, some time before the opening of the General Assembly, I had lunch with a friend of mine whose judgment on international affairs I respect. "I've given up looking for hopeful signs in the world situation," he said. "We can count on relations between this country and Russia deteriorating in the next year or two. But I don't think there'll be war. I've come to the conclusion that it's important to spend a lot of time reading history; it saves one from despair."

This matches the remark of one of the better radio commentators last Friday when I interrupted him hammering out his daily script: "I've been looking for one optimist in the house," he said, "and can't find him."

Much of the day-to-day debate here at Lake Success is exasperating and depressing until you realize that the big facts are fixed, and unchanged by debate. From where our diplomats sit the Soviet Union is planning expansion. The nine-nation Communist manifesto was a declaration of intensified political infiltration into Western Europe. Our main job is to contain Russia.

From where Russia's policy-makers sit the big facts are America's undamaged industrial equipment, now accounting for two-thirds of the world's production; America's imperialist intentions as expressed in our aid-to-Greece program and the Marshall plan.

Both sides consider their foreign policy to be guided by rational considerations of security and defense. Each side suspects the other of dark designs which, if allowed to come to fulfilment, will produce the third world war. Neither side wants war.

Our representatives are softer spoken. They can afford to be. They have the majority of the world's nations on their side.

The Russian spokesmen are vehement, bad-tempered, and bad-mannered. It may be that they speak angrily out of frustration, knowing that they are going to be outvoted. It is more likely that they are laying down the propaganda line in rabble-rousing terms which may have some effect in the long nights of Europe's cold and hungry winter.

Certainly their tactics are making few converts at Lake Success. I talked last week to an old League man who had known Litvinov well in the Geneva days. He had just come out of a session in which Vishinsky and Bebler had whipped themselves up into a fine frenzy. "Litvinov," he said, "in the appeasement days put his case with challenging effect. It was an unanswerable case. But so much of what these men say is sheer nonsense."

PERHAPS it would make little difference in the overall big-power picture if the Russian group spoke with more restraint and precision. But it would certainly make a difference in the stand of the small nations. It is clear that a number of these are increasingly unwilling to stand up and be counted alongside of the giants. They don't want to be involved in a showdown. But instead of appealing to the smaller nations the Russian spokesmen have brushed aside with contempt anything which looks like conciliation or compromise. Had Spaak and Delbos not been subjected to the merciless invective of Vishinsky and Bebler, had the Swedish resolution not been lost sight of in the tempest, a more balanced and constructive line of action might have been agreed on in the Balkan crisis. As it was, most delegates were eager to end the brawl by a vote.

The Russian refusal to have anything to do with the Assembly's decision to set up a Balkan commission may well presage their action on the American proposal for a "Little Assembly." Here again, if moderate restraint can be counted on, there are enough delegates with doubts about the Interim Committee as originally outlined to modify the proposal in a useful fashion. There is something to be said for a continuing Assembly committee ready not only to take notice of crises as they occur as a result of Security Council deadlocks but also to be of some assistance in the continuing work of other committees.

Already the term "Security" has been dropped from the title of the American resolution, and the Canadian delegation is known to have a wider conception of the Little Assembly's functions. But if the Russian group meets the proposal with as little finesse as they used in the Greek question, the more reasonable voices just will not be heard.

INCIDENTALLY, in the Economic Committee the Russians demonstrated that they could put a case with force and effectiveness. Dr. Aratiunian, chief economist of the Russian Foreign Office, spoke on the question of Europe's recovery. He accused the United States of using political tests for post-UNRRA relief. He asserted that it was America's plan to rebuild German industry along capitalist lines and that under American pressure Britain's efforts to socialize German heavy industry in its zone had been abandoned. "The United States," he said, "is converting the Ruhr into a base for executing its plans in Europe to the detriment of the peace-loving peoples and of the German people itself." This criticism,

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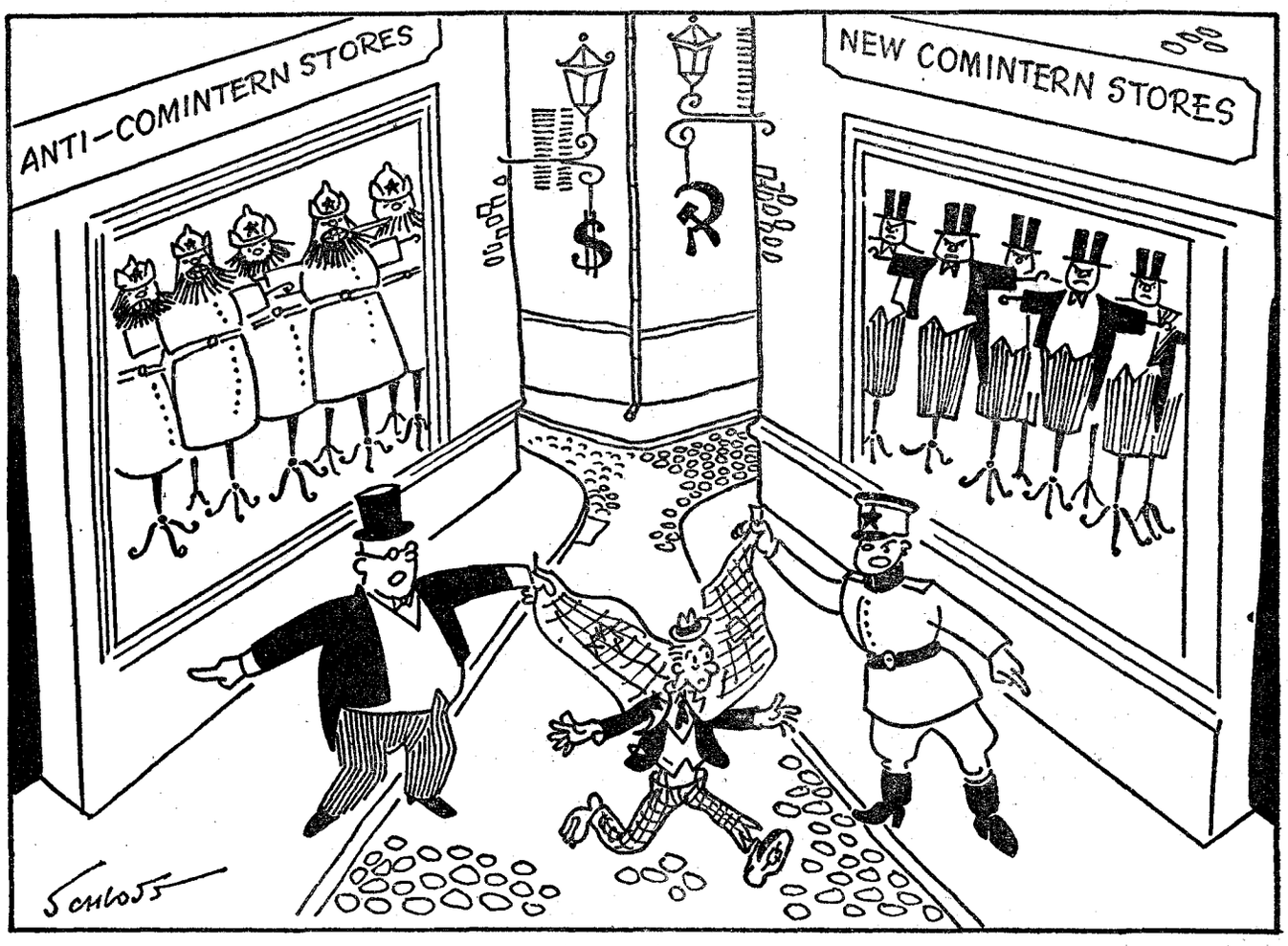
it will be recalled, had already been made by the French. Dr. Aratiunian quoted American spokesmen to prove that the Marshall plan was primarily political in aim and that, from an economic point of view, it was directed more at saving American capitalism than at saving Europe.

Now, even if he neglected to mention that the Eastern nations had had a chance to participate in the Marshall plan and withdrew of their own accord or at Russia's bidding, few will challenge the statement that America's economic policy has political ends. Americans, however, would be slower to suggest that an economic plan which might save Western Europe from communism amounts to establishing a bridgehead for the eventual war against the Soviet Union. In fact, many would argue that if the Marshall plan is adequately implemented—and the "if" will be there until Congress decides what action it will take and when—war may be indefinitely postponed.

It is the economic, and consequent political, instability in Western Europe which is contributing most to the fear and suspicion on both sides. Moreover, stabilizing Western Europe may lead to the resumption of normal economic relations between East and West, and from economic cooperation political understanding may develop.

WHAT is astonishing is how one sign of accord between the big powers rekindles the hope that was in evidence when the United Nations was set up at San Francisco. The long-awaited American statement on Palestine and the remarkably similar Russian statement that followed yesterday have restored some faith in the world organization. The majority report of the United Nations Special Committee has now become the agreed basis of settlement, acceptable to most nations except the Arab states. There will be discussion about details, about frontier revisions, about immigration during the transition period. There will be more serious discussion about government during the transition period—both statements are vague on the means of enforcing the Assembly's recommendations. Britain has said it is withdrawing its troops at an early date and is not willing to enforce a settlement on which both sides do not agree. There is no United Nations force. And the "volunteer constabulary" suggested in the American proposal has been given various interpretations. But among the great powers there appears to be no fundamental disagreement. If this unanimity persists, many delegates are of the opinion that threats of Arab resistance will not materialize into serious armed action. Together, the American and Russian proposals lay the ground for an intelligent and just settlement.



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Americans and Their Myths

BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

EVERYTHING has been said about the United States. But a person who has once crossed the Atlantic can no longer be satisfied with even the most penetrating books; not that he does not believe what they say, but that his agreement remains abstract.

When a friend tries to explain our character and unravel our motives, when he relates all our acts to principles, prejudices, beliefs, and a conception of the world which he thinks to find in us, we listen uneasily, unable either to deny what he says or entirely accept it. Perhaps the interpretation is true, but what is the truth that is being interpreted? We miss the intimate warmth, the life, the way one is always unpredictable to oneself and also tiresomely familiar, the decision to get along with oneself, the perpetual deliberations and perpetual inventions about what one is, and the vow to be "that" and nothing else—in short, the liberty. Similarly, when a careful arrangement of those melting-pot notions—puritanism, realism, optimism, and so on—which we have been told are the keys to the American character is presented to us in Europe, we experience a certain intellectual satisfaction and think that, in effect, it must be so. But when we walk about New York, on Third Avenue, or Sixth Avenue, or Tenth Avenue, at that evening hour which, for Da Vinci, lends softness to the faces of men, we see the most pathetic visages in the world, uncertain, searching, intent, full of astonished good faith, with appealing eyes, and we know that the most beautiful generalizations are of very little service: they permit us to understand the system but not the people.

The system is a great external apparatus, an implacable machine which one might call the objective spirit of the United States and which over there they call Americanism—a huge complex of myths, values, recipes, slogans, figures, and rites. But one must not think that it has been deposited in the head of each American just as the God of Descartes deposited the first notions in the mind of man; one must not think that it is "refracted" into brains and hearts and at each instant determines affections or thoughts that exactly express it. Actually, it is something outside of the people, something presented to them; the most adroit propaganda does nothing else but present it to them continuously. It is not in them, they are in it; they struggle against it or they accept it, they stifle in it or go beyond it, they submit to it or reinvent it, they give themselves up to it or make furious efforts to escape from it; in any case it remains outside them, transcendent, because they are men and it is a thing.

There are the great myths, the myths of happiness, of progress, of liberty, of triumphant maternity; there is realism and optimism—and then there are the Americans, who, nothing at first, grow up among these colossal statues and find their way as best they can among them. There is this myth of happiness: black-magic slogans warn you to be happy at once; films that "end well" show a life of rosy ease to the exhausted crowds; the language is charged with optimistic and unrestrained expressions—"have a good time," "life is fun," and the like. But there are also these people, who, though conventionally happy, suffer from an obscure *malaise* to which no name can be given, who are tragic through fear of being so, through that total absence of the tragic in them and around them.

There is this collectivity which prides itself on being the least "historical" in the world, on never complicating its problems with inherited customs and acquired rights, on facing as a virgin a virgin future in which everything is possible—and there are these blind gropings of bewildered people who seek to lean on a tradition, on a folklore. There are the films that write American history for the masses and, unable to offer them a Kentucky Jeanne d'Arc or a Kansas Charlemagne, exalt them with the history of the jazz singer, Al Jolson, or the composer, Gershwin. Along with the Monroe doctrine, isolationism, scorn for Europe, there is the sentimental attachment of each American for his country of origin, the inferiority complex of the intellectuals before the culture of the old Continent, of the critics who say, "How can you admire our novelists, you who have Flaubert?" of the painters who say, "I shall never be able to paint as long as I stay in the United States"; and there is the obscure, slow effort of an entire nation to seize universal history and assimilate it as its patrimony.

There is the myth of equality—and there is the myth of segregation, with those big beach-front hotels that post signs reading "Jews and dogs not allowed," and those lakes in Connecticut where Jews may not bathe, and that racial *tchin*, in which the lowest degree is

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assigned to the Slavs, the highest to the Dutch immigrants of 1680. There is the myth of liberty—and the dictatorship of public opinion; the myth of economic liberalism—and the big companies extending over the whole country which, in the final analysis, belong to no one and in which the employees, from top to bottom, are like functionaries in a state industry. There is respect for science and industry, positivism, an insane love of "gadgets"—and there is the somber humor of the *New Yorker*, which pokes bitter fun at the mechanical civilization of America and the hundred million Americans who satisfy their craving for the marvelous by reading every day in the "comics" the incredible adventures of Superman, or Wonderman, or Mandrake the Magician.

There are the thousand taboos which proscribe love outside of marriage—and there is the litter of used contraceptives in the back yards of coeducational colleges; there are all those men and women who drink before making love in order to transgress in drunkenness and not remember. There are the neat, coquettish houses, the pure-white apartments with radio, armchair, pipe, and stand—little paradises; and there are the tenants of those apartments who, after dinner, leave their chairs, radios, wives, pipes, and children, and go to the bar across the street to get drunk alone.

Perhaps nowhere else will you find such a discrepancy between people and myth, between life and the representation of life. An American said to me at Berne: "The trouble is that we are all eaten by the fear of being less American than our neighbor." I accept this explanation: it shows that Americanism is not merely a myth that clever propaganda stuffs into people's heads but something every American continually reinvents in his gropings. It is at one and the same time a great external reality rising up at the entrance to the port of New York across from the Statue of Liberty, and the daily product of anxious liberties. The anguish of the American confronted with Americanism is an ambivalent anguish, as if he were asking, "Am I American enough?" and at the same time, "How can I escape from Americanism?" In America a man's simultaneous answers to these two questions make him what he is, and each man must find his own answers.

Rice and Riots in India

BY ANDREW ROTH

Cannanore, India, September 25

"I DON'T know much about China, but it seems to me that here in South India the conflict between landlords and tenants is so sharp that it may grow into a civil war of Chinese proportions." An earnest young North Malabar lawyer was speaking to some thirty or forty people crowded around him on the verandah of his house, come to ask his aid against the landlords and the dread Malabar Special Police. I was told that he had a thriving commercial practice which brought him about 3,000 rupees a month, but that he was contributing more and more of his time and labor to defending peasants who had been evicted or arrested. The Malabar Special Police is a semi-military force formed in 1921 to suppress the Moplah peasant uprising. It is kept apart from the people and has as bad a name for brutality as the "Black and Tans" had in Ireland or the S. S. battalions in Europe.

North Malabar, more than any other area in India, has political and economic problems which remind one of China's. In many villages one sees the armed guards, the terrorized faces, and the battered huts that the Chinese civil war has left in its train. There is no such communal conflict as has scarred northern India, but violent disputes over agrarian questions have broken out between an extremely conservative local branch of the Congress Party and a militant and strongly intrenched Communist Party. In the last election in the Chirakkal Division Congress got 22,000 votes and the Communists 17,000.

The rightward swing of the Congress Party is marked in North Malabar. The agrarian structure of the province is the most backward in all India, with three or four nonproducing landlords and sub-landlords taking as much as 80 per cent of the crop without making any contribution. An official investigation in 1940 recommended reforms, but nothing was done. In the United Provinces and some other areas where Nehru still exerts strong influence in the local Congress organization, the big landlords remain outside of the organization and fight it, but in North Malabar, when they saw that India would achieve self-government and Congress would rule, the landlords moved in on the party and took it over. They have amassed tremendous wealth through the increase in rice prices and have been able not only to buy their way into the leadership of the local organization but to bribe local officials into submission. Within Congress they are supported by equally conservative manufacturers.

ANDREW ROTH has been in India for the past several months reporting for The Nation *on conditions since independence.*

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During the war Malabar suffered severely from food shortages, and in consequence of the widespread malnutrition cholera and other epidemics took a heavy toll. The post-war picture has been no better. Last year the rice ration sank to eight ounces a day—800 calories, half the jail ration for convicts—and this year it has already gone down to six ounces. Despite these conditions, the provincial government has done virtually nothing to control the big landlords, who have been holding back 25 per cent of the crop, or about 100,000 tons, to sell in the black market.

The Communists have seized the opportunity to make a number of dramatic attacks on the agrarian structure. The peasant pays from 50 to 80 per cent of the crop to the landlord *in kind*, which means usually that he is not left with enough to feed his family and use for seed. The Communist-led *Kisan Sabha* (Peasant Union) has proposed that rents be reduced and be paid *in cash*. It argues that if the rice remains in the hands of the peasants, not only will their families be better fed but the surplus will be more likely to be sold to the government, since the peasants have less influence with the procurement officers.

In some places, such as the village of Karivellore, the battle over rice has caused casualties. This village, whose land is largely owned by the Rajah of Chirakkal, has to import more than half of its food. The Rajah has been accustomed to taking his rent in kind, shipping the rice out of the village, and selling it where he chooses, presumably in the black market. Last fall the peasants, spurred on by the Peasant Union, demanded that he take his rent in cash and allow them to keep the rice. When he refused, the peasants would not let him move the crop. The Rajah then called in the Malabar Special Police, which sent 200 armed men to seize the grain. When the peasants resisted, the police opened fire and killed two persons, including a fourteen-year-old boy. Others were arrested and beaten mercilessly, and 196 persons were later indicted.

KANDAKKAI, a village which I visited, also had a brush with the Special Police. I did not go to Ellarinchi, one of the main trouble spots, because I learned that most of the men there were either in jail or hiding in the jungle and that the others would be too frightened to be seen talking to a foreign reporter. To reach Kandakkai we rode for hours in a jeep, then sloshed on foot along rain-soaked trails where the bridges were single slippery logs, and finally took to native canoes. The thin-faced, aquiline-nosed, sensitive-looking schoolteacher with whom I talked there was reluctant to discuss the disturbances. "Such horrible atrocities cannot be described," he said gloomily, "you have to experience them." He was one of five brothers who were a little better off than most of the 2,000 villagers. Two were teachers, one had a shop dealing in rationed goods, one a tea-shop, and the fifth worked as a lumberman. All of them, with their wives and children, lived in one house.

The sensitive village intellectual in a backward, poverty-stricken country like India frequently takes one of two roads. He escapes to the big city, where there are more opportunities for an interesting life; or he goes back to his village after obtaining his education and becomes known as a radical through his efforts to raise his village to his own level. The radicalism of the village schoolteachers is fostered by their miserable pay—most of them get only 30 rupees ($10) a month. Our Kandakkai schoolteacher was further embittered by the fact that when he tried to supplement his earnings by cultivating a piece of land, his landlord fixed a rent in kind which amounted to 80 per cent of the average crop he could hope to harvest.

Organizers for the Peasant Union found him an eager convert, and he worked for the union in his spare time. When the village built a nice little reading-room with a tiled roof, part of it was given over to the Peasant Union. In the small stock of books the leftist point of view was well represented.

In the fall of 1946 Kandakkai joined with other villages where the Peasant Union was strong in agitating for lower rents. When the landlord ordered the eviction of one tenant, the others fell to and helped him reap his crop. In December fifty men of the Malabar Special Police visited Kandakkai, searched eighteen houses, and beat up two men. In January they raided the village twice, arrested a number of people, beat up others, and destroyed household utensils. In February the police established a camp of 100 men in the village, and our schoolteacher and the other men of his family fled to the jungle.

"In the dead of night thirty M. S. P. men came to our house," he told me. "None of the men folk were at home because we were afraid of arrest. The police forced the women to open the door by threatening to smash it in. Then they ordered the women out of the house and entered and searched it. One of them said, 'Show us where your husbands are or we'll burn the house down.' They broke all the earthen cooking vessels. Afterward they let the women in, but they came back on several other nights in the hope of finding us there. A month later they locked the house and forbade the women to enter it. The women and six children were forced to eat, cook, and sleep on the verandah for six weeks."

Finally the police said they would allow the women to live in the house if the schoolmaster gave himself up. Unwilling to see his family suffer, he surrendered and found himself charged with rioting and with reaping a crop without the knowledge of the village headman.

As this man finished telling about his experiences,

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other villagers poured out their stories. The police had dragged one man off to their camp, pounded him with their fists, and jailed him on the same charge of unauthorized reaping. Another had been hit with the butt end of a rifle so that his hearing was affected. "They must have picked on me because I had asked the landlord several times to lower the rent," he said. The reading room had been completly wrecked, its books and periodicals torn, its benches and tables broken. Relatives of wanted men had been molested. Three village women had been gagged and raped.

A deputation of women went to the headman of the village, carrying their broken kitchen utensils, to protest against the acts of the M. S. P. and to demand compensation. An old lady of sixty-five named Kunkakkamma and a number of men were arrested on the charge of threatening the headman's life. After a beating in the police camp, they were sent to the Cannanore central jail, where they were kept for two months before being released on bail.

One result of the activities of the M. S. P. was a disastrous loss of food. The men who fled to the woods to escape police violence had to leave their crops unharvested. When their neighbors tried to bring in the grain they were stopped by the police, who hoped the overripe fields would lure back the men. It was estimated that some 12,000 pounds of rice were eaten by cattle.

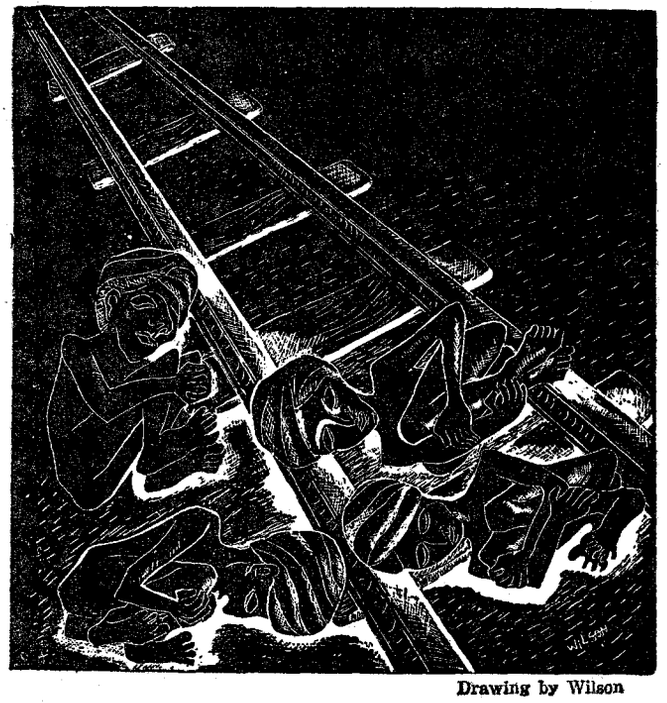
"We find it hard to exist," one of the villagers said sorrowfully. Most of them had always been on the verge of destitution, and now their lives had been completely disrupted. Many had lost their pitifully few belongings through the wanton destructiveness of the police. Temporarily they were cowed, but they were convinced that their previous demands were entirely warranted. "As soon as the M. S. P. is withdrawn, we'll have to reorganize and ask for compensation for the damage that has been done to us," the schoolteacher said quietly. "And we'll present our demands for lower rents again no matter how great the repression."

THE tension in North Malabar relaxed somewhat with the advent of independence. To celebrate August 15 the local Congress committee, dismayed by the police brutality, asked that the amnesties widely granted throughout India to political prisoners be extended to the jailed agitators. Almost all the Communist and Peasant Union leaders being held without charges were released, as were those who had been jailed for speechmaking. In Cannanore, Congress, Communist, and Moslem League speakers hailed Independence Day from the same platform.

But the antagonism did not die out completely. None of the political cases—such as that against our schoolteacher—were dismissed, and in the first week of September one of the leading North Malabar Communists was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for an inflammatory speech delivered in 1946. Another leader, who had been underground during the severest of the repression, emerged after August 15 only to be arrested for a similar offense. Some of the conservative Congress leaders in the area feel that continued police repression is necessary to make the Communists cease their "violent agitation." The headman of one village said, "Ninety-five per cent of the people here are Communists. They are quiet now because of the M. S. P. If the police are withdrawn, there will be trouble again."

Other local Congressmen think differently. When Balakrishna Nair, president of the Chirakkal Division Congress Committee, was asked his opinion about the withdrawal of the M. S. P., he answered, "Certainly I want them withdrawn. We have been requesting, complaining, bemoaning—all to no purpose." He was deeply annoyed by the apathy and indifference of the provincial government. "I have seen the Ministers half a dozen times," he declared, "but nothing happens. And if the Ministry is indifferent, the police officials are arrogant. Every authenticated complaint I take to them is dismissed as a false allegation." Mr. Nair felt that the violence of the Communists could not be ended by counter-violence by the police.

There are indications that the provincial Congress leaders are coming around to the view that the best way to prevent further clashes is to ease the terrible conditions under which the peasants live. A bill to buy out the landlords and another to lower the rents have been introduced into the provincial legislature. If they are passed, and enforced in such a manner as really to improve the lot of the peasants, South India may escape the fate of strife-torn China.



Drawing by Wilson

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Neutrality Pays Off

BY ARMAND SCHWAB, JR.

Zürich, September

COMING into Switzerland from France, near Geneva, you get to a little cafe even before the Swiss customs office. In that cafe, about ten yards from the French border, you can buy rich, strong Swiss beer instead of the pale malt water that is being brewed in France today. And you know you have reached the little island of abundance that lies unbelievably in the center of starving Europe.

The advantages of staying out of two world wars are apparent. It is good to visit a country without traumatic psychoses, political crises, inflation, or hungry mobs, a country which has plenty of white bread, butter, beer, and meat. It is good to observe the common respect and understanding of the four linguistic and national groups that combined so long ago to form this tight, tenacious republic. Yet even if you happen to be a citizen of the most prosperous nation on earth you are likely to feel some resentment. You cannot help realizing that the source of all this Swiss prosperity was the war the Swiss avoided. And you notice that they have almost no humility about their good fortune.

Of course one must be very careful in criticizing a people for staying out of a war. And it is only fair to remember that Switzerland at least did not join the German side like some of our other friends. But the fact remains that its neutrality was profitable for Switzerland. Throughout the war the country received enough German coal and gasoline to meet essential demands, though not enough to use for luxuries. These fuels and other imported goods were supplied by Germany in return for the privilege of transporting freight—but not troops—across Switzerland to the southern fronts. The Swiss controlled the famous Alpine tunnels, including the St. Gotthard with its heavy traffic, and through their power to blow up the tunnels they could keep Germany in line. At the same time the Swiss made machinery, textiles, and other things for the Germans, and got their profit. The Germans even permitted us to get some goods, in return for which we sent food to Switzerland.

THERE is still some food rationing in Switzerland but nothing like that in neighboring countries. Building activities continued even during the war and are in full swing now. The lack of destruction, coupled with the traditional Swiss neatness, makes the towns and villages seem as elegant as a lady's boudoir in comparison with the rest of Europe. The shops sell imported luxury items on which no other country would dream of wasting foreign exchange. There are drugs and cosmetics, clothing, and typewriters from America. And there are apparently more automobiles here per capita than in New York.

Prices in general have risen, although not steeply. (An excellent federal regulation forces upward revision of wages in certain categories of employment as the cost of living mounts, and so far there has been no vicious inflation.) For citizens of nations whose currency Switzerland wants, a very favorable exchange rate makes travel here inexpensive, but for citizens of "soft-money" countries, like France and Italy, the rate is almost prohibitive.

With help and encouragement from the government the tourist industry is regaining its old importance. Hotels are again giving the cold shoulder to natives, after heartily welcoming them during the lean war years. This year the British especially have thronged here, hungrily buying nylons and pastry with their government-limited allowances. So far, Americans have not come in large numbers, except for the 200,000 soldiers on furlough during and after the war, with whom the Swiss appear to have been completely enchanted.

A tourist industry inevitably makes a nation seem made up of oily hotel keepers and bowing concierges, but for every plump landlord there are a lot of farmers and skilled mechanics. Factories are turning out the famous Swiss products, as carefully made as ever. Skilful dairying is offsetting the dry weather and the lack of machinery. Credits are piling up in foreign banks.

Stability and plenty tend to beget conservatism, and this is true of Switzerland. The people's thinking is heavy and careful; their habits are reserved, even prudish—the largest city, Zürich, is practically run by a *Frauenverein* similar to our W. C. T. U. The country's long-standing democratic traditions, however, have produced a politically alert citizenry. Old-age and medical security, wage-adjustment laws, and tight fiscal control are among the recent enactments of the federal government, whose jurisdiction is being steadily extended.

In international affairs the Swiss seem strangely detached. Reading a Swiss magazine, or talking to a citizen, you feel as if you were standing outside the world, somewhere in space, watching its gyrations. The Swiss observe and comment, critically, inquisitively, without wholly participating. However, they worry a lot about the next war. Their disposition and traditions make them fiercely anti-Russian. They follow the usual Western European pattern of flattering America as "the real leader of the world today," but they are rather more willing than most Europeans to accept the inevitability of another war. While other people feel sick at the thought of going through it again, the Swiss say frankly that they might be able to stay out of the next war too.

ARMAND SCHWAB, JR., has just returned from a trip to France, Italy, and Switzerland.

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Conscientious Objectors on Strike

BY HOWARD SCHOENFELD

[*The story told here is six years old; yet it is timely. There are still some nine hundred Selective Service violators in prison, of whom about one hundred are conscientious objectors or Jehovah's Witnesses. A large number of the other eight hundred are considered conscientious objectors by church and welfare groups, although not, apparently, by the President's Amnesty Board. Sixteen thousand* released *violators of the Selective Service Act are still deprived of civil rights. In their interest, and in the interest of their fellows still in jail—some in Danbury Prison—we print Mr. Schoenfeld's article.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

THE Warden adjusted his glasses. "Men," he said, "this is my last appeal to you." His position was both delicate and difficult. If word of our impending strike reached the public, there would probably be a terrific reaction to it, and he was almost certain to be made the scapegoat. Meanwhile his authority within the prison seemed sure to be undermined. He was a man with a comparatively advanced outlook. There were adequate recreational facilities in his prison, smoking was permitted in the mess hall, movies were shown once a week, inmates were allowed to put on shows, and the prison generally was run along what are considered liberal lines. Indeed, Danbury is cited as one of this country's model prisons, and the worst we suffered under the Warden's administration was solitary confinement.

The Warden was a good-natured man and a sports enthusiast. No broadcast of a fight or an important game passed without the inmates hearing it. And no inmate was happier than he over the fact that the prison softball team was undefeated in a really excellent league.

The Warden was a liberal with a position of authority in an evil system. Despite his efforts, his prison was a hell on earth.

Negroes were segregated; convicts in their teens were thrown into solitary; foul food was frequently served; threat of the lunacy ward was employed to coerce the sane; reading matter was censored unmercifully; stool pigeons plied their rotten trade; men "blew their tops."

A good impulse had prompted the Warden to ask the prison bureau to send us to his prison. His fate was to discover us unmanageable. We were a proud, stiff-necked lot who openly boasted we were the most radical men in the country. Inescapably, the Warden was forced to oppose us in order to uphold his authority and, with it, the authority of the evil system that gave him his power. For a kind man, it was a tragic situation.

The Warden continued: "If you carry through with this strike, not only will your lives be affected, but liberalism itself may be wiped out in the prison bureau. All of you know how hard some of us in the bureau have struggled to better the lot of the inmate. We've made progress lately, and we expect to make more, but the forces against us are powerful, and the balance is delicate. A strike at this time may upset that balance and throw the prison bureau back twenty years."

"But we aren't striking against the prison bureau," someone said.

"It doesn't make any difference why you're striking. The issue here is whether your group of twenty or thirty men has the authority in this prison, or whether the people of the United States, through the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Warden, have that authority."

We decided to strike and take the consequences.

THE bureau, thoroughly aroused, acted swiftly. Carloads of Department of Justice men armed with machine-guns and tear gas were unloaded at the prison gates, according to the grapevine. Other Department of Justice men, the grapevine added, were released in the prison disguised as inmates. Guards let the regular inmates know they would be safe in starting fights with conscientious objectors. If we fought back, our case as pacifists would look pretty silly, and the bureau could get tougher with us.

Early in the afternoon stool pigeons began circulating among the men in an effort to bring a particularly vicious pressure to bear on us. The prison as a whole would be punished if the strike took place, they explained. Six or seven hundred bootleggers, counterfeiters, embezzlers, smugglers, pimps, white slavers, con men, dope peddlers, robbers, and murderers stood to lose considerably by our strike; yet not one of them put the slightest pressure on us to change our stand. We had cast our lot in with theirs from the beginning, and all of our group of ministers, divinity students, and Socialists had been in solitary or under restrictions at one time or another for protesting against the evil conditions under which they and we lived. Wherever men of our group went in the prison, the other inmates gathered about them. And many an inmate who had never known kindness before, or even decent treatment, discovered such things existed and regained his self-respect.

HOWARD SCHOENFELD is a free-lance writer who was imprisoned for nine months as a conscientious objector.

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By late afternoon the prison was in a state of nervous apprehension. When the supper whistle blew that evening, the men poured out of their cell blocks and surged across the prison yard toward the mess hall, carrying us along with them. Midway they came to a sudden halt.

The Warden was standing on a small box in the center of the yard. Guards quickly rounded up the men and herded them into a bunched mass in front of him. I moved toward the rear, and two guards detached themselves and moved in behind me. Other guards stationed themselves through the mob wherever there were conscientious objectors. The men stirred restlessly, anxious to get to their suppers. Night was falling, and a high wind was nipping through the yard.

The Warden began to speak. As everyone knew, he said, a general strike was being called the next morning by a small group of inmates. The nature of the strike, as he saw it, did not concern the rest of the inmates, and he believed that they wouldn't join us. We were not striking against the prison bureau or the administration of the prison, he pointed out, but against the government of the United States.

The patriotism of the group calling the strike, although we were not yet at war, was of a questionable nature. We had deliberately disobeyed the law of the land—the Selective Service Act—and that was why we were in prison. We had been trouble-makers from the beginning, and now we were wilfully calling a strike against the best interests of the nation.

Everybody was against war, including himself, and he had gone along with us as far as he could, offering to allow us the use of the chapel for prayer and meditation on the designated day, but we had rejected the offer. The selfishness of our course was apparent. A strike in the prison at this time might prove disastrous. The prison bureau was more liberal than at any time in its history. He dwelt on the gains that had recently been made. Our strike would be a serious blow at those gains. The regular inmates would see the wisdom of steering clear of our strike. He expressed his confidence in the men and said he knew he could count on them for support. He paused for applause.

Silence met him.

Hastily he continued his speech, but he was interrupted by a clear, respectful voice: "That's not quite true, Warden." The speaker was Arle Brooks, a minister of the Disciples of Christ, known among the men for his meek character and spiritual humility.

"Seize that man," the Warden said, pointing at Arle.

Guards quickly surrounded the minister, locking their arms around him. The inmates, knowing Arle's character, broke into spontaneous laughter at the precaution. The laughter died instantly when the Warden ordered Arle taken away and thrown into solitary. A wave of angry muttering swept through the crowd.

IN THE dead of night a guard shook me awake. "Get your clothes and follow me!"

I picked my way through the mass of sleeping men and followed him into an adjoining room. Presently, I was led down the corridor and through the maze of the prison to a large waiting-room. Inside were the other men of our group, sitting silently. I lit a cigarette. A guard took it from me. The clock on the wall ticked.

A lieutenant of guards entered and checked our names against a list. He disappeared suddenly and as suddenly reappeared. He read a name. "David Dellinger."

David rose and followed him. David was a divinity student whose first act in prison had been to protest against the segregation of Negroes. Walking into the mess hall he had deliberately stepped out of the white men's line and sat at a Negro table. The mess hall is the most heavily guarded spot in a prison, and the simple action took extreme courage. Punishment was swift and ruthless. Outside, David had done settlement work in slums while attending theological seminary. Before that he had held an English exchange scholarship.

We waited. The guards watched. The silence was heavy. David did not return. The lieutenant entered and looked at his list. "Sturge Steinert," he said.

Steinert rose and followed him. We listened as the echo of footsteps receded in the corridor and faded out. Steinert was a Socialist who had been a student at Temple University. The American Legion had awarded him a scholarship for winning an essay contest on Americanism. The scholarship, I believe, was withdrawn when he put his ideals into practice. He also failed to return.

The Lieutenant entered and read another name. "Gordon Goley."

Goley was a religious man who had renounced all things material and devoted his full time to a study of the Bible.

The lieutenant called for us, one by one. The wait for those toward the bottom of the list seemed interminable. Finally the lieutenant entered and called my name. I rose and followed him. At the end of the corridor I was frisked before being led through the steel-barred door that opened into the administrative section of the prison. The lieutenant opened the door to the Warden's office and motioned me to enter.

The Warden was sitting at his desk wearing evening clothes, the coat of which he had discarded in favor of a smoking jacket. In one hand he held a volume of "Leaves of Grass"; with the other he was tuning a station on his desk radio.

He invited me to be seated and asked me if I had read Whitman. His manner was utterly friendly, but throughout the interview he continued to manipulate the radio dial nervously. He expressed his regret that he hadn't had the opportunity to discuss my viewpoint with me, and said he hoped that when I was released we could

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meet on more social terms over a glass of beer. I returned the courtesy. He went on to show his interest in my reasons for joining in the strike, and I showed him a copy of a note I had earlier given to the captain of the guards, stating my motives. He read the short note and brought the interview to a close by calling the lieutenant of the guards, who led me away and placed me in solitary confinement.

SOLITARY confinement was referred to as "constructive meditation" by the prison authorities. It differed in no way, so far as I know, from solitary confinement anywhere.

My cell measured five paces long and two wide. The walls and floor were bare concrete. The door was metal with a small glass aperture. Guards spied on me from time to time. Strict silence was maintained, although I soon discovered that by pounding on the wall I could get a response from George Houser in the next cell.

The first day dragged uneventfully, the second monotonously, the third was worse. I paced my cell for hours, threw myself exhausted on the cot, lost myself in day dreams. Insatiable sexual desires overwhelmed me, and I lost count of the days in the interminable silence, which was broken only by the dull voice of the guard during count. I began to look forward eagerly to mealtimes, and one evening I found a cigarette and match neatly taped on the underside of the tray. Ecstatically I smoked it to the end, burning my fingers and becoming dizzy and nauseated.

The days passed. I made up songs and listened to the words in my mind. I wrote mental essays, novels, plays, and short notices. I scratched my growing beard and braided my hair. I reviewed my life, picking out the incidents I liked best and dwelling on them. I thought about God and prayed. I pounded the wall and paced the cell. Weeks passed.

One day a guard entered the cell block, walked down the corridor, and opened the door to Benedict's cell. Benedict was a fine athlete; in particular he excelled as a softball pitcher. Only one man in the prison could catch his fast ball. The prison team, built around his pitching, had been tied for first place in its league.

The Warden, as I have said, was a sports lover. Now the guard offered Benedict his freedom if he would pitch in the championship play-off games, which apparently were scheduled for that day. Benedict pointed out that he was in no condition to pitch. The guard explained he would be given time to limber up and mentioned how disappointed the inmates would be if the championship was lost. Benedict thereupon said he would do it on condition that all the men in solitary, including the inmates not in the pacifist group, were released. The guard said he would speak to the Warden and trudged off down the corridor.

He returned. The Warden could not agree to Benedict's terms, he said, but had offered a compromise. He would release all the conscientious objectors for the game, and Benedict permanently. Benedict refused. The guard disappeared, returning shortly with another offer. The Warden would release *everybody* for the game, and Benedict permanently. Benedict refused. The guard disappeared.

A lieutenant of guards appeared and told Benedict the men were warming up for the first game. He said he thought he could prevail on the Warden to release all the conscientious objectors permanently and the other men for the game if Benedict would pitch. Benedict refused.

Fully an hour passed. Then the captain of the guards entered and ordered us released. The prison team had lost the first game and the Warden had agreed to Benedict's terms.

Grinning widely, we left our cells, and laughing at one another's pasty complexions, bearded faces, and unkempt hair, hurried out into the prison yard. A wave of applause went through the stands as Benedict rushed down the field and began warming up. In true Frank Merriwell fashion he summoned his strength after the long weeks of demoralized living and in a superhuman and prodigious performance pitched our team to a victory. This feat made the sporting pages of many newspapers, but another piece of news did not: after the games Benedict and the rest of us were rounded up and thrown back into solitary. The guard on duty was so disgusted that he did not even bother to lock our cell doors.

THE next day at noon the Warden reversed his stand and released us. The midday whistle had blown and the men were already in the mess hall, eating. We straggled across the empty yard, basking in the sun, enjoying our freedom. A spontaneous wave of applause broke out among the men as the first of our group entered the hall. Surging across the hall, the wave became a crescendo. Guards ran up and down the aisles; they were ignored. The pandemonium increased when Benedict came in, and a volcano of thunderous and deafening sound burst out when Arle Brooks entered. But when the "regular" criminals who had been in solitary entered, the convicts literally went wild, whistling, beating their metal cups on the tables, and stamping their feet.

We stood in the center of the floor, astounded at the demonstration. It became clear to me that although they were applauding Benedict, Brooks, and all of us who had been in solitary, they were doing something more. A mass catharsis of human misery was taking place before our eyes. Some of the men were weeping, others were laughing like madmen. It was like nothing I had ever seen before, and nothing I ever expect to see again.

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Del Vayo—No. 18 on the Agenda

THE Spanish question is on the agenda of the General Assembly, but for all kinds of conflicting reasons most delegates are against a full discussion such as took place last December. Open and covert friends of Franco are anxious that nothing disturb the Christian General's happiness as he prepares to initiate the second decade of his rule with ceremonies proclaiming the regency. Others, friendly to the Spanish Republic, fear that in the present mood of tension little or nothing would be gained by pressing the issue; they would prefer to let the December resolution ride until a more favorable moment. But no matter what either group would like, the Spanish question will not evaporate.

For Spain remains a live issue, and Washington and London are terrified lest it explode without warning. I have often cited evidence to show that in 1945, at the war's end, the Franco regime could have been replaced by a democratic government without undue violence. Franco was ready to quit that year; only the unexpected support he received from the United States and Great Britain saved him.

For a while, in order to satisfy the Catholic monarchists in Spain, the Vatican qualified its support of the dictator; but on one of his visits to Rome Cardinal Spellman supposedly convinced the Pope that Franco must be kept in the saddle to strengthen the anti-Russian coalition. Whatever the Department of State and the Foreign Office may say, their aid to Franco is a tangible fact. In 1946, when Spain was close to bankruptcy, Great Britain concluded a monetary agreement with Franco which strengthened the regime considerably. Official trade figures for this year, published in Madrid on October 2, list the United States and Latin America as buying 53 per cent of Spain's total exports. The withdrawal of ambassadors did not reduce this more practical kind of recognition.

Inside Spain everyone, whether Falangist or Republican, knows that the United States and Great Britain are keeping Franco in power. The Anarchist organization has been the latest to acknowledge it; an underground statement issued at the end of September is not without political significance, since the Anarchist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo is the second-largest trade-union organization in Spain. For a number of reasons, the most immediate being their hatred of the Communists, the Anarchists until recently took the position that Spain must join the Western bloc. Now they have undergone a change of heart, out of despair at the position of the great Western powers. America's growing friendliness toward Franco was reported by Francisco Lucientes, Washington correspondent of the Spanish news agency. He cabled late in August: "Such neutral anti-Marxist countries as Spain greatly interest the North Americans as a counterbalance of good sense against the ideological madness that is lashing Europe." An editorial in *Arriba,* the Falangist organ, noted with satisfaction that Franco Spain had become part of "the American line of defense." The Anarchist manifesto lashes out against such an alliance between the Western democracies and a regime they have so often verbally repudiated. It is by far the most violent of the recent attacks launched by the Spanish underground against this country; it bitterly denounces the British Socialists as well and declares that "the only possible way left to the Spaniards is the way of violence."

The new element in the Spanish situation is the fact that the indirect help Franco has received is no longer sufficient. The economic situation has worsened so rapidly since last spring that indirect foreign aid cannot stave off collapse much longer. The United States faces the alternative of including Franco Spain in the Marshall plan—an unthinkable repudiation of its proclaimed position—or of advancing a big loan to the Caudillo. A few weeks ago I said that the 200-gram bread ration in France created a revolutionary situation. What of Spain, where the second cut this year has reduced the ration to 150 grams—officially; actually 100 grams? A Spanish crew jumped ship the other day in a Venezuelan port, declaring to the authorities: "There's no way to keep alive in Spain." Lack of foreign currency is preventing the regime from meeting the most pressing needs of the population.

Last week I received a letter from Madrid from an anti-Franco but conservative Spanish business man with whom I have kept in contact since I left Spain. When I saw him in France a year ago he told me Franco was solidly intrenched and the Republicans ought to accept a compromise—a monarchy or some ambiguous interim regime that would allow Republicans to return to Spain without being shot. Now he writes: "For the first time I must admit that you are right. There is no halfway remedy for this terrifying process of disintegration. The worst of it is that catastrophe is sweeping toward us at headlong speed. My heart breaks at the thought of what awaits our country." Daily the underground grows stronger and the repression more intense. When members of the resistance are captured, they are immediately sent to the terrible prison of Alcalá de Henares, invariably sentenced to death, and shot the next day. Official government sources acknowledge that 214 Republicans were executed between January and the end of August.

Whether the United Nations believes it or not, the Spanish question is an urgent one; when it explodes, the repercussions will reach farther than in the Greek affair. Nor can any government say it lacked advance warning. For months the Republicans have been saying that should a major revolt against Franco break out, deep lesions would appear all over Europe at the points of political tension. No party would have to lift a finger, but opposing camps would form, and thousands of Europeans would rally to the fight in a new and greater International Brigade. But on the eve of the Assembly meeting, when a high Washington official was approached about the need for a positive U. N. stand on Spain, he said: "Don't bother me with Spain now. I have too many headaches already."

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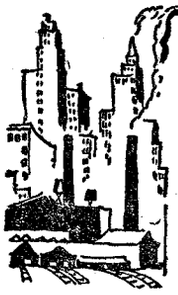

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

European Customs Union—II

LAST week I wrote about the tentative but significant approaches of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation to the question of removing the barriers that have done so much to block intracontinental trade. I tried to show how strong was the economic case for a customs union covering as large an area as possible. At the same time I was forced to admit that the road to this desirable end was an extraordinarily rocky one.

One major difficulty was mentioned by Mr. del Vayo in last week's *Nation*. Pointing out that the sixteen "Western" nations that attended the Paris conference "constitute no economic entity," he declared that "only a United Europe will ever know peace, reconstruction, and prosperity." Certainly, the most effective European union would be one that brought together the industrial regions of the West with the surplus food areas of the East. That would constitute an economic entity nearly as well balanced and as well supplied with natural resources as the United States.

The mutual need for close economic relations between the Western and Eastern European groups was by no means ignored by the Paris delegates. In fact, their report, optimistically perhaps, assumed that by 1951 exchange of goods between the two regions would be approaching its pre-war volume. Moreover, they made it clear that they did not wish the Study Group which is to examine the problems involved in setting up a customs union to be exclusively Western; invitations to participate are to be extended to all European nations. Unfortunately, the political considerations which induced the Soviet Union to boycott the Marshall-plan conference and to order its satellite countries to follow suit will almost certainly bar, in the foreseeable future, even the discussion of economic union covering all Europe. Russia views any European union not under its control as a menace to its security; the United States is not prepared to aid any group dependent on Moscow. Europe is the first victim of the "cold war."

Caught between these rival forces, what are the Western Europeans to do? Must they abandon all hope of closer cooperation and continue to keep their economies in watertight compartments? Surely even an incomplete union is better than nothing. Indeed, the very fact that Western Europe is not self-sufficient, that it will have to rely on industrial exports to finance imports of food and raw materials from other parts of the world, makes the abolition of its internal trade barriers all the more imperative. Without that step the scale of most industries will remain too small for full efficiency, and competition with the United States will be possible only if wages are kept very low.

Assuming, then, an effort to establish a customs union among some or all of the nations represented at Paris, what are some of the hurdles to be cleared? An obvious one is the existing differences in standards of living, levels of taxation, scope of social services, and so forth between the countries in the group. If all internal barriers to the movement of goods, capital, and labor were removed, differences in living standards would tend to disappear, though, as we know from American experience, large variations inside a free-trade area are possible. The problem in Europe would be to attempt to bring about a leveling up rather than a leveling down and so avoid the kind of social strain, to cite one example, produced by wage competition between New England and Southern textile mills.

Some wishfully thinking American officials and bankers support the customs-union project in the belief that it will provide a springboard from which Europe will dive back into the laissez faire river. But Europe has bitter memories of the dangerously erratic currents in those waters. With every government in Western Europe—and, what is more, nearly every party from which an alternative administration might be drawn—committed to economic planning, hopes of a return to a free market are pretty unrealistic.

That being the case, it follows that any free-trade area in Europe must have an over-all plan into which national plans are integrated. A French scheme for doubling steel production, for instance, would have to be coordinated with the steel and coal programs of the other members of the group. A British plan to speed up housing would have to be considered in relation to building activity and supplies of materials throughout the whole area.

Again, before a customs union could become fully effective, it would be necessary to arrange for free convertibility of the currencies of all members or, better still, to provide for a new, common, currency. But that implies some standardization of taxation; otherwise convertibility might lead to a headlong flight of liquid funds from Britain and the Scandinavian countries, where direct taxes are high and rigorously collected, to France and Italy, where they are lower and more easily evaded.

In other words, a customs union among a number of countries with planned economies cannot be an isolated move. To make it succeed, the participating members would have to be willing to surrender some part of their national sovereignties to a body representing the whole group. As the London *Economist* wrote on August 23:

> It would be idle to suppose that a customs union could ever be established within a purely economic framework. A political structure would have to be built alongside. . . . It may even be found that it is, after all, a waste of time to tackle the whole complex of questions wrapped up in Western European interdependence as exclusively from the economic angle as the present prominence of the idea of a customs union would suggest. It may be that, in the end, the political arrangements will have to come first.

That is a big order: so big that were the alternatives for Western Europe less grim, one would be tempted to dismiss the idea of economic union as fantasy. As things are, however, it is just possible that the instinct for survival will triumph over the centrifugal forces that have long been Europe's curse.

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BOOKS and the ARTS

THE BEGINNING

So summer comes in the end to these few stains
And the rust and rot of the door through which she went.

The house is empty. But here is where she sat
To comb her dewy hair, a touchless light,

Perplexed by its darker iridescences,
This was the glass in which she used to look

At the moment's being, without history,
The self of summer perfectly perceived,

And feel its country gaiety and smile
And be surprised and tremble, hand and lip.

This is the chair from which she gathered up
Her dress, the carefullest, commodious weave

Inwoven by a weaver to twelve bells . . .
The dress is lying, cast-off, on the floor.

Now, the first tutoyers of tragedy
Speak softly, to begin with, in the eaves.

WALLACE STEVENS

"As Much Humanity as Possible . . ."

THE JOURNALS OF ANDRE GIDE. Volume I: 1889-1913. Translated from the French, with an Introduction and Notes, by Justin O'Brien. Alfred A. Knopf. $5.

THE publication of this first of a projected three-volume American translation of Gide's "Journal: 1889-1939" should mark a fresh start, rather than a continuation, of Gide's reputation in the United States. The "Journals" draw Gide's other works into focus; but do many people now read Gide's former American translations? Scattered and few and out of series, these translations began to appear in 1924 with "Strait Is the Gate," reached a high point of popular interest in 1927 with "The Counterfeiters," and narrowed down thereafter to a few assorted works presented more or less at random. After 1931 no more was heard of Gide in ordinary trade editions (a limited edition of "Si le grain ne meurt . . .," translated by Dorothy Bussy under the title "If It Die," came out in 1935) until after his disillusionment with Soviet Russia: "Return from the U. S. S. R." appeared in 1937 and "Afterthoughts on the U. S. S. R." in 1938. The latest work published in America is Malcolm Cowley's translation of "Interviews Imaginaires," in 1944; and here again, as in the two former books, Gide is presented as an aging but active idealist, nearer the edge of politics and journalism than the center of literature.

The "Journals" correct these views and provide a firm basis for judgments of Gide's character and place in letters. For they are the central pier upon which the imposing edifice of his work is built. Gide, in fact, from the beginning of his career has been a diarist. The regular, often daily record of thought and event has provided him with a form at once exigent and large, wherein his desire for stability as well as for movement and change, his detailed inquisitiveness as well as his wider curiosity, could be satisfied. Bored with the "big machines" of French literary form, incapable of filling in conventional backgrounds or of inventing stock figures, wary of technical tricks not based on actual emotion, happy to change his mind concerning the worth and direction of his material while that material was still in the process of composition, Gide has always preferred the short form, where effects can be brought off with full spontaneity, before the impelling emotion is exhausted.

Gide's most unfriendly critics have never been able to attack him in respect to his style. The present volume of the "Journals" shows us that style in the making, from the days when the young symbolist had not yet decided to write "without metaphors" to 1913, when the accomplished man of letters had evolved a manner of writing so clear and flexible that it was a matter of pride to himself and of emulation to his disciples. The youthful admirer of Châteaubriand has "sharpened his beak" upon Stendhal. The "Journals" soon come to be based upon sincerity of feeling. In this way they never become a mere record of events. Neither do they fall into the errors and *longueurs* of the *journal intime,* since Gide effectually skirts the endless introspective self-indulgences of the intimate diarist. Experience and interest continually enliven the record: books read, music played (Gide is an "intellectual" who can use his hands with precision and speed), journeys undertaken, gardens planted, friends met, meals eaten, daylight walks and midnight prowls described, methods of work delineated with the same care as the most obscure of passing moods, the weather and the scenery enjoyed. Gide's advance into maturity is by no means in a straight line, without forced detours or periods of circuitous progress. But he early found his pace and his road. He writes, in 1905: "I escaped early from that world in which, to appear proper, I had to watch myself too closely."

Gide's courageous moral stand, which had so much influence on the post-1918 generation, is not indicated very clearly here: he has written his "confessions" elsewhere. The first exposition of his moral theories appeared in "Les Nourritures Terrestres" in 1897, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, at a time when, in French intellectual life, all that was not "determinist" or "finalist" was suspect. A rigid positivism had penetrated French thought to an excessive degree. The only escape for "sensitive souls" was into the refuge of an equally strict and confining religious dogma. In this situation, through bitter

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personal suffering, after a stay in North Africa and a friendship with Wilde, Gide dared to reconcile irreconcilables. He brought emotion over into the moral realm, declaring the experiences of the flesh to be of equal value to those of the mind and the spirit; and he affirmed that spiritual values could operate in a life-giving manner outside the rituals of religion. Always claiming a basic Christianity, he began his meditations on the figure of a Savior who stood for man's joy rather than for man's tragic and deforming frustration.

As the world of affairs begins to claim more of his attention, Gide meets people and events head-on; he does not take anyone's opinion as his own; he analyzes character and motive with a penetrating combination of intuition and acumen. His dislike of virtuosity in art parallels his impatience with the deviousness and pretentiousness of human beings. The tension between the oppositions within himself continues; perfect balance between impulse and scruple, asceticism and sensuality is never entirely achieved. There are breakdowns, nervous crises, and capitulations, as well as spiritual and physical convalescences and reanimations. By keeping the poles of the tension clear, however, Gide escapes most of the enticements of self-deception. His life and relationships must be kept, so far as possible, vital and necessitous. All must be natural in the area of the senses while at the same time the will must function with a kind of "supple obstinacy." Gide's dealings with his colleagues and friends never lack an edge of critical sharpness; but shows of ambition, jealousy, rancor, and spite never occur, and small gossip and downright malice are relatively rare. His chief desire is to have friends who "exist behind and beyond what [they] reveal to us." He does not neglect "the insulted and injured."

> Take upon oneself as much humanity as possible. That is the correct formula. . . . Absence of sympathy equals lack of imagination. The most gifted natures are perhaps the most trembling. . . . As soon as an emotion decreases, the pen should stop; when it continues to run on just the same—and it runs on all the more easily—writing becomes detestable. . . . The wonderful thing on this earth is that we are forced to feel more than to think.

These are the words of a man and an artist who has detached himself from killing and "glacial" abstractions and moved into a world where the modern divided spirit is at least partially healed, where there are provable and classic linkages between the timeless and the time-bound.

Nothing has been spared—neither good-quality large paper nor an intelligent and meticulous editor—to make this American edition, to be complete by 1950, impressive. The French *Pléiade* edition (1939 and 1940) on which it is based still retains a peculiar charm, however. Complete in one volume, printed on thin paper, its 1,352 pages compactly yet flexibly bound, this French edition resembles some object delightful and usable: a convenient missile, let us say, against "the Philistine"; or a concentrated form of nourishment, on which one could maintain life over a long period.

LOUISE BOGAN

The Straight Way Lost

THE MIDDLE OF THE JOURNEY. By Lionel Trilling. The Viking Press. $3.

WHEN we meet John Laskell he is thirty-three, crossing the perilous Dantean decade in which the risks, doubts, and challenges of a man's life declare themselves and his personality first begins to contract into the limitations and decisions to which it is fated. He is "a fortunate young man of the middle class" who has disciplined his privileges by an earnest if skeptical liberal faith. He has become, after earlier creative leanings, an authority on housing, so justifying in his own mind the social bearings of his political sympathies. He has loved once, a healthy, intelligent girl called Elizabeth Fuess, and they loved in the intelligent, reasonable way of an emancipated modern passion. She, however, died suddenly, and he has not yet committed himself again to the risk of so inexplicably violated a confidence in life.

His friends are mostly liberals like himself. One is Arthur Croom, assistant professor and Socialist, a man "in whom the drive for power did not destroy intelligence and character," a "man of the near future." Another is Croom's wife Nancy, charming, domestic, college-bred, and soon to reveal "a passion of the mind and will so pure that, as it swept through her, she could not believe that anything that opposed it required consideration." A third is Kermit Simpson, rich publisher of the left-ist-liberal *New Era,* "very handsome, a big rangy man who was good at field sports, court games, and boating," but also "all too bland. There was no roughness in him. He never followed passion where it led, nor did necessity ever constrain him to resistance. The blandness was fatal to his character." There is finally Gifford Maxim, member and secret agent of "the Party," a "man of the far future, the bloody, moral, apocalyptic future that was sure to come," who has become the standard of dogmatic conviction around which the lesser faiths and good intentions of his friends have come to take their bearings.

Laskell, when the crucial summer of the novel begins, has just recovered from an almost fatal attack of scarlet fever. It has laid open the lesions and doubts of his character. He has learned for the first time the difference between the sick and the well, between the meaning of death and the healthy world that fears to hear death mentioned, between the will to live and the wish to die, between security and fear and what these mean in the struggle for existence. Just as he is about to emerge into the world again to go to Connecticut for the curative summer the Crooms have arranged for him, Maxim drops a bombshell by revealing that he has renounced the Party. Laskell goes to the country. He lives down the road from the Crooms' house with the Folgers. He meets the semi-derelict family of the Caldwells—Duck Caldwell, selfish, honest, alcoholic, imperative, with a mind "not wicked" but "the pure will of nothingness," who works around the Croom house; his wife Emily, who once ran a tea-room and still echoes a feebly Bohemian past; and their child Susan, to whom Laskell becomes unwittingly attached.

Laskell, his wounds still open, thus becomes involved in a drama of faiths that comes to include not only the latent

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ON THE PILOTS WHO DESTROYED GERMANY IN THE SPRING OF 1945

I stood on a roof top and they wove their cage
Their murmuring throbbing cage, in the air of blue crystal.
I saw them gleam above the town like diamond bolts
Conjoining invisible struts of wire,
Carrying through the sky their geometry
Woven by senses delicate as a shoal of flashing fish.

They went. They left a silence in our streets below
Which boys gone to schoolroom leave in their playground.
A silence of asphalt, of privet hedge, of staring wall.
Through the glass emptied sky their diamonds had scratched
Long curving finest whitest lines.
These the day soon melted into satin ribbons.
Falling over heaven's terraces near the sun.

Oh that April morning they carried my will
Exalted expanding singing in their aerial cage.
They carried my will. They dropped it on a German town.
My will expanded and tall buildings fell down.

Then, when the ribbons faded and the sky forgot,
And April was concerned with building nests and being hot
I began to remember the lost names and faces.

Now I tie the ribbons torn down from those terraces
Around the most hidden image in my lines,
And my life, which never paid the price of their wounds,
Turns thoughts over and over like a propeller
Assumes their guilt, honors, repents, prays for them.

STEPHEN SPENDER

conflict between himself, the Crooms, and Simpson, but also the deeper conflict between these middle terms of the modern moral and political intelligence and the oppositions that hedge them—the derelict Caldwells on one side; the passionately dogmatic Maxim, driving from Communist to religious absolutism, on the other. The drama grows in tension; its debate proliferates; it arrives at a climax of passion (Laskell and Emily Caldwell) and another of death (Susan's, at the hand of her father). It tests the cluster of friends to their foundations. And the summer ends with their relations profoundly and permanently disturbed. One autumn morning Laskell, now tested in more than his health yet stronger in more than body, takes the train back to the city.

These, too briefly and inadequately, are the characters and outward events of Lionel Trilling's first novel, and readers who know not only his critical endowment but also his earlier stories will know what to expect in the way of a narrative keenly sustained and subtly articulated. It is, indeed, a novel of remarkable—of almost unflinching—austerity. Little or nothing has been conceded to the conventional inducements of current fiction. Effects of action and background are reduced to a minimum. Humor, by-play, color, and incident are pared to the quick. The treatment is on first acquaintance stark in its economy of detail and "atmosphere." But it defines a milieu that has, with the emergence of a new type of novel from the critical thought of the past ten years, become a new area in fiction. (It finds differing versions in "Memoirs of Hecate County" and Eleanor Clark's "The Bitter Box," and recent minor examples like John Kelly's "All Souls' Night" and Wallace Stegner's "Second Growth" aid in defining a new genre among novelists.)

It is the milieu of the contemporary literary and political intelligentsia. One must admit that nothing the realists and naturalists of the nineteenth century tackled in the way of unromantic discouragements when they undertook to bring the drab lives of servant girls, nuns, shopkeepers, miners, and wage slaves into the novel is missing for the present-day artist who attempts to dramatize a world as generally bleak, unheroic, and denatured as the world of contemporary thinkers, writers, and professors. Those flats in the Village, cottages on the Cape, houses in Connecticut, and campus colonies!—is it possible that the slightest spur to imagination lingers in them? One may, moreover, tend at first to complain that Mr. Trilling has abstracted his characters from their real roots and conditions in modern society; that he has endowed their acts and words with an obtrusive self-consciousness and absence of human spontaneity that reduces their dramatic appeal and pathos to a minimum. We are told little of where or how they originated in American life. All of them—the Crooms, Laskell, Simpson, even the more localized Caldwells, Folgers, and Walkers—are suspended in a kind of social and moral void. Their talk is strung to a painful pitch of personal abstraction. Exceptions do occur: two wonderful nurses and a country clergyman; but often their performances—especially the high-strung, bright-minded speeches of Nancy Croom, the pathetic soul-hungers of Emily Caldwell, or the efforts of her child Susan to recite a Blake poem "with expression"—are calculated to set the teeth on edge.

What Mr. Trilling has written is, quite overtly, a dialectic novel. The term appears in his pages. His language is analytical, his structure polemic, his sequence of scenes and confrontations among characters virtually syllogistic. Yet it is a remarkable testimony to his skill and sincerity, and to the tenacious probity of his thinking, that he has been able to keep his plotting sharply dramatic; that as we read we lose our sense of lacking familiar fictional ingredients; and that we become profoundly absorbed in his story, not only as a brilliantly sustained argument but as the record of an essential experience and milieu of our age, one fully equal in validity to the actualities of proletarian fiction and far more salient than the later attenuations and enfeebled appeals of the novel of sensibility.

By that time also, convinced by the passion with which ideas and convic-

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tions can possess the modern mind, we feel the authenticity of his scenes and people. Nancy Croom, with her socialist logic and scarifying affection, becomes a classic portrait of one type of modern woman. The little girl with her Blake poem is a true and pathetic image of cultured childhood (the Progressive-Schoolgirl in Mr. Trilling's story, "The Other Margaret" was a brilliant anticipation of this portrait). Kermit Simpson is the muzzy-minded prototype of a dozen wealthy patrons of the left. The scenes of the drama itself precisely define the orbit of middle-class gentility, academic inhibition, and well-to-do patronage that has nurtured the cautious self-deceptions and guilty fears which have lamed the liberal position in modern thought and made the triumph and tyranny of absolutes so sinister in our age.

For the theme of the novel is the fate of the liberal critical intelligence in our time—and its necessity. John Laskell's is the mind in which that fate is tried, the focus, made vulnerable by illness and a fresh access of clarity, of the conflict between the political and moral passions that contend around him. Mr. Trilling is, I suppose, the finest analyst and historian of the liberal predicament we have among us today. His account of that problem in his earlier books and essays is permanent. We are kept fully aware, in this novel, of his rigorous insight and schooling in the liberal dilemma. It is probably inevitable that one should recall his admirable book on Forster in this connection—particularly if one emphasizes the fact that "The Middle of the Journey" is quite independent of Forster's work in style, method, and content—and likewise his searching book on Arnold. It is also inevitable, knowing his brilliant critical talent, to recall how fully he knows of the existence of modern classics of dialectic art like "The Sacred Fount," "The Ivory Tower," "The Magic Mountain," "Howard's End," and "The Counterfeiters." Such books have provided a schooling for his imagination; he has not denied himself the most formidable models; but they have not deprived him of his own language and invention. What he said in his Forster book about that novelist's dissection of the evils of the "undeveloped heart" in modern life is as relevant here as what he said about the role which Forster assigns to the "relaxed will" and to "the Primal Curse . . . the knowledge of Good-and-Evil" in modern morality. When I discussed Mr. Trilling's book on Forster in these pages four years ago I compared the Englishman's art with that of André Gide. What those men share in their conception of the novel is shared also by Mr. Trilling. For him also the novel is what Gide called it—"a crossroads—a meeting place of problems"; he knows the importance of believing that "whatever your station or country, you should believe only what is true, and what you would be disposed to believe if you were of another country, another station, another religion."

When John Laskell, at the end of his momentous summer, faces the rival angers of his friends—the Crooms with their inflamed conviction of the guilt of society which permits no responsibility in the individual; Maxim with his dogmatic moralist belief in individual responsibility which admits the mitigation of mercy—he knows at last why they are angry with him. It is "the anger

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of the masked will at the appearance of an idea in modulation. The open will does not show that anger; only the will masked in virtue shows it." But against their accusations Laskell holds to his position. It *is* the will in modulation that must survive if absolutes are to be denied their tyranny and the intelligence is to survive for the uses of justice and truth. Mr. Trilling has been, in some quarters, severely—and ineptly—censured for defending "individual morality" against "social morality" in his story "The Other Margaret." This novel, with its subtle, athletic, and unsimplified articulation of the whole truth, "the double truth," of social and individual values, shows how truly he sees the complex actuality of values which the simplistic moralism of dogmatic or abstracting minds, hot for action and accusation, ignores. On that score alone "The Middle of the Journey" becomes a powerful document. But it is more than a document. It is a brilliant example of a new mode of fiction, one whose function in the moral dilemmas of our age his acute critical sense has seen, and whose claims on the imaginative resources of his generation the finely controlled, humanly faithful art of this novel demonstrates. It is a book that brings the best critical intelligence now discernible in America into play with an absolutely honest creative talent. And it shares with only a few recent books of my acquaintance the honor of establishing that cooperation of talents on a sound, perhaps even on a classic, footing.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL

Something Less Than Abigail

ABIGAIL ADAMS. By Janet Whitney. *Little, Brown and Company. $4.*

THIS biography, or rather semi-fictionalized life, of Abigail Adams belongs to a school of writing which I might venture to call—if the word can be used in a non-pejorative sense—feminine. The substance of it is letters, quoted or paraphrased, of the heroine; and happily the wife of John Adams could write with vigor and distinction. Interstices among the sources are filled in with imaginative recreations of settings, conversations, and passions; these unfortunately are composed in a vein contrasting widely with the hard clarity of Mrs. Adams.

Thus at the birth of John Quincy we find that Abigail, "lying in the big feather bed, exhausted, happy, and sad, had no suspicion that the two men who, each in his own way—one so earnestly masculine, one so nuddling and small—comforted her sorrow, were incipient Presidents of a republic yet unborn." Occasionally the writing achieves still greater miracles of anticipation, as with the announcement that Abigail, having been born in Weymouth, went visiting to Quincy and there breathed "what was to become her native air." Sometimes, striving for the dramatic, it reaches sheer bathos, as when, presented with Abigail pining for letters from John in Philadelphia, we are suddenly asked, "What, then, about the postal system?"

What, then, we are bound to continue, is wrong with this kind of writing? One difficulty, in this case, may be that the source is just too good. To offer anything beyond self-effacing annotation to the text of Abigail Adams's letters is impertinent. The delicate flavor of history is in them, the subtle essence of a provincial Enlightenment, rationalistic yet Puritan, proud yet insecure, but the bouquet evaporates quickly when opened in the heavy atmosphere of "Fate was busy at the loom." It adds little to our comprehension of the love of Abigail for John (she referred to him between 1797 and 1801 even in letters to her own sister as "the President") to be told, "He was very much of a man's man, but women fell for him." And when, in Mrs. Whitney's part of the narrative, we are treated to a dialogue in which the little woman strengthens the resolution of her spouse to scorn the proffered bribe of the royal governor, when she shyly murmers her admiration and "his strong arms came round her waist," we can only long for the relief of the actual Abigail who said—in words not quoted by Mrs. Whitney—that her husband's opponents were "the most base, profligate, and abandoned Culprits which were ever permitted to scourge the Nations of the Earth."

However, the trouble is not only that such sentimentality fudges the narrative and dulls the characters. Abigail Adams lived in history and distilled it into her letters. They are a joy to read, just as they stand, but it is a greater pleasure to bring some sense of history to the reading. For an author, even a novelist, to identify himself too closely with his central figure is dangerous if he still hopes to put that figure into meaningful relations with other characters or with time and space. In the biography of a historical character such identification of writer and subject becomes pernicious, for if the biographer has any function beyond editing the words and listing the acts, it is to make an effort, however tentative, toward determining what, in the light of history, his subject means. No actor in history, not even so intelligent an actor as Abigail Adams, can quite say it. Instead of such interpretation Mrs. Whitney offers: "He gathered her to him in the dusk, and held her to his own hard-beating heart." In a narrative so centered Jefferson and Hamilton, whose differences with John Adams were the stuff of history and upon which Mrs. Adams had some good things to say, inevitably become insubstantial figures. We are told that Abigail "browsed through many a volume," but we learn little of what books she read or with what ideas her mind, generally recognized as about the best of contemporaneous American women's, was actually furnished. That she was the wife of one President and the mother of another is less interesting than that she was the fine exemplar of eighteenth-century New England culture; this aspect of the biographical problem is not even recognized in Mrs. Whitney's treatment.

Those who would enjoy the privilege of meeting Abigail Adams face to face will turn to the edition of her letters to her sister recently published in *The Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society,* Volume 55, under the expert editing of Stewart Mitchell. Mrs. Whitney has touched upon only the high spots of these rich manuscripts; she has, however, been allowed by the custodians access to "relevant portions" of material not generally available to students. We are obliged once more to regret that the decision as to what among the Adams papers may or may not be relevant is denied the community of scholars. This volume is pathetic testimony to the fact that guardians do not always appreciate the best interests of their wards.

PERRY MILLER

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Bosses and the Boss

YOU'RE THE BOSS. By Edward J. Flynn. The Viking Press. $3.

REILLY OF THE WHITE HOUSE. By Michael F. Reilly as Told to William J. Slocum. Simon and Schuster. $3.

MR. FLYNN'S "You're the Boss" is clearly destined to become a small political classic. I do not know of any book which combines so effectively a candid analysis of the machine system, an able defense of it, and a realistic account of machine activity in concrete political situations. Few politicians are sufficiently reflective or articulate to describe the techniques which have become for them a matter of instinct or conditioned reflex. No one perhaps since Martin Van Buren has equaled Ed Flynn in uniting professional virtuosity with insight and intellectual detachment.

"We cannot have government without elections," Mr. Flynn writes, "elections without organizations, or organizations without a 'spoils system' to keep them going." Political machines and their flora and fauna are thus indispensable to a democracy and will survive the passing squalls whipped up by "reformers" or "good-government" people—words Mr. Flynn rarely uses without derisive quotation marks. So long as the citizens are unwilling to give as much time to politics as the politicians do, they must expect machine rule; and when they do give the time, they can overthrow any machine which fails to serve their purposes—a fact which an intelligent boss never forgets. Whether machines will be good or bad "depends upon the interest of citizens in their party government, upon whether that interest is just as strong and unflagging as their interest in their local, state, and federal government." Thus though bosses are inevitable in our system, bad bosses are not. "This book is respectfully addressed to you, the reader," Mr. Flynn concludes, "because you're the boss."

Mr. Flynn's general analysis seems irrefutable. His defense of the machine, however, depends on the element which philosophical defenders of bossism, from Van Buren and Thurlow Weed down, have always made paramount but which practitioners have very often ignored: that for the most practical reasons of survival a machine must produce relatively honest and efficient government. When Flynn became leader of the Bronx, for example, it was proposed that he take advantage of the proffered aid of gangsters in fixing elections. His rejection of this proposal was on good pragmatic grounds.

> If they engaged in such an election practice to help me, they would in turn come back and ask me to help them illegally. This price was too high to pay. Furthermore, I did not even want gangsters in the Bronx. So I decided not only to decline their assistance but to kick them out. I have found out that sticking religiously [*sic*] to this decision has paid me dividends many times over.

The trouble with machines, of course, is that so few bosses have Flynn's preference for the long view over the quick profit. In the American political equilibrium a reform movement is the price the boss pays for self-indulgence.

Mr. Flynn's comments on Roosevelt and the New Deal are strictly from his professional frame of reference. The broad social impulses of the New Deal appear to have had little interest for him—a fact which distinguishes him from someone like Van Buren. He would tolerate the New Dealers so long as they stuck to policy-making, but when Tom Corcoran muscled into the organization field, Ed Flynn struck back like a gamekeeper fighting poachers. A deep affection for Franklin Roosevelt, as for his wife, shines through an uncommonly honest assessment of F. D. R.'s personal virtues and shortcomings. "His two greatest weaknesses, in my opinion," Flynn writes, "were the bitterness which he engendered within himself and the weakness he displayed in his inability to be frank and open in many instances in his dealings with people."

"Reilly of the White House" adds a number of entertaining sidelights on Roosevelt. Michael F. Reilly succeeded Colonel Starling as head of the Secret Service detail at the White House on the day of Pearl Harbor. Through the war his assignment was to protect the President wherever business or relaxa-

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tion might take him. The book contains interesting material on the methods of protection and lively glimpses of Roosevelt in formal and informal postures. William J. Slocum tells it all in a tirelessly sprightly style.

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.

Arriere-Garde

ATLANTIC HARVEST. Memoirs of the *Atlantic.* Compiled by Ellery Sedgwick. An Atlantic Monthly Press Book. Little, Brown and Company. $4.50.

IT IS perhaps disappointing that this volume of Mr. Sedgwick's does not turn out to be an "objective" and genuinely "representative" anthology of pieces from the *Atlantic Monthly* illustrative of its history from the beginning, in 1857, to the end of Mr. Sedgwick's own editorship in 1938. Certainly it is not that, and no one should buy the book who expects to find in it a single scrap by Emerson or the elder Holmes, by Lowell or Mrs. Stowe, by Howells or Henry James, by Charles Eliot Norton or E. L. Godkin or William Vaughn Moody. Mark Twain *is* here, as he ought to be, and so too are Sarah Orne Jewett and Edith Wharton, John Jay Chapman and Woodrow Wilson; but they are here for their own sakes, or for editorial reasons of Mr. Sedgwick's, and not primarily because they exemplify what the *Atlantic* once meant in American intellectual life.

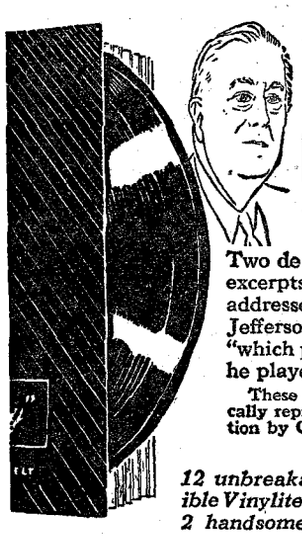
The anthology, however, has a real interest, though a different one; it is a frankly personal collection by Mr. Sedgwick of pieces that continue to interest or please him, and as such it furnishes us with a kind of blueprint for the editing of a highly successful and even distinguished magazine of what might be called the intellectual *arrière-garde.* There is no doubt that Mr. Sedgwick very early hit upon an editorial formula that was to prove brilliantly successful in its appeal to a very considerable segment of the reading public, and this anthology gives us a compact view of how that formula operated.

Its most important single ingredient might be described as the True Story Genteel or True Confessions for the Well-Educated. A good third of the pieces in this volume are in this decidedly non-"pulp" vein of personal revelation, autobiographic testimonial, or refined remembrance of things past. The educated girl from the East who married a handsome young moonshiner, the public-utilities executive who underwent conversion, the great actor's son who decided to become an actor himself—characters such as these were long familiar to *Atlantic* readers, and they rightly predominate in this anthology. Fortunately, too, Mr. Sedgwick's passion for the reminiscent sometimes presents us with a recollective essay on a different level; an admirable example here is Henry Villard's really lively "Recollections of Lincoln"—published when Bliss Perry was editor.

A hardly less important ingredient of the formula is the Grade-B or even Grade-C short story, preferably the short story that, while it comes to grips with some painful issue of the moral life, inculcates, indirectly or explicitly, an essentially wholesome and Anglo-Saxon—if possible American, and best of all New England—resolution of that issue. In consequence, one looks in vain for the writers of short fiction who, during the thirty years of Mr. Sedgwick's editorship, were at work on the frontiers of literary expansion and discovery—Sherwood Anderson, say, or Virginia Woolf, or Katherine Anne Porter, or William Faulkner—and what one does find is Katherine Fullerton Gerould, Mary Webb, Hetty Hemenway, and Walter D. Edmonds. It is true that Hemingway is represented here by "Fifty Grand," and Lawrence not by a story but by a rather inferior sketch; but it is hard not to feel that these are sops held out by Mr. Sedgwick to some placable Cerberus of the literary underworld.

Let me mention one more constituent of a typical *Atlantic* issue, and then have done: it is the more or less informal essay in the tradition of Lamb or Oliver Wendell Holmes, and it is represented here by an intolerably arch and allusive essay on cats by Agnes Repplier, a tweedy sort of piece "On Dogs and Men" by Henry Merwin (a name I must confess to no familiarity with, otherwise), and a really corny essay on national differences by Salvador de Madariaga—"Englishman, Frenchman, Spaniard"—the thesis of which, if this can be credited, is that the Englishman is essentially a man of action, the Frenchman a man of thought, and the Spaniard a man of passion. It must be added that Mr. de Madariaga puts forward this view in a bold and uncompromising manner.

Like all editorial formulas, Mr. Sedgwick's naturally has its negative aspect; he knows what ought to be left out as well as what ought to be put in, and it is striking that this anthology contains no poems whatever (unless perhaps A. P. Herbert's brilliant Shakespearean parody, "Two Gentlemen of Soho," should be excepted) and no literary criticism, unless, again, one should except Woodrow Wilson's often reprinted essay on "Mere Literature" and an effort by Ellen Terry on the letters in Shakespeare's plays—a piece that is not at all inconsistent with Ellen Terry's having been an admirable actress.



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In conclusion, one likes Mr. Sedgwick for having originally printed, and for including here, William G. Thomson's affecting summary of "Vanzetti's Last Statement." NEWTON ARVIN

The Big Muddy and MVA

THE MISSOURI VALLEY, LAND OF DROUGHT, FLOOD, AND PROMISE. By Rufus Terral. Yale University Press. $3.75.

PROBABLY the most important thing that can be said about the Missouri Valley is that the American people—including those who live in the valley—know so little about it. They cannot be blamed too much, since not until 1945 did the government begin to map the area by modern methods. It still does not collect adequate weather data in the region. Its experts do not really know how much water there is in the Missouri River system, and land still is being irrigated without determining whether this will increase its fertility or sterilize it through the release of alkali.

Since the homesteading days, since the railroads flooded the East with enticing circulars to sell the land which had been given to them, people have had false notions about the region. Few realize that a large part of it is almost a desert, dry, treeless, windswept. Having been impressed by a grade-school geography's emphasis on the length of the river, they are amazed to learn that it actually carries less water than, say, the Tennessee—a much shorter stream draining a much smaller watershed. Nor do they know that discriminatory railroad freight rates and the lack of industries help to make the Missouri Valley—like the South—one of the major economic problems of the United States.

This problem is not likely to be solved until it is fully stated. There is not likely to be an MVA until the need for it is widely understood. Ignorance about this region is the greatest barrier to the realization of its potentialities. Private-power lobbyists and other ax-grinders exploit it to the full. Against this ignorance Mr. Terral's book should be of immense help. Unlike the technical "literature" about the valley's problems, it is written for the intelligent layman. And unlike magazine arti-

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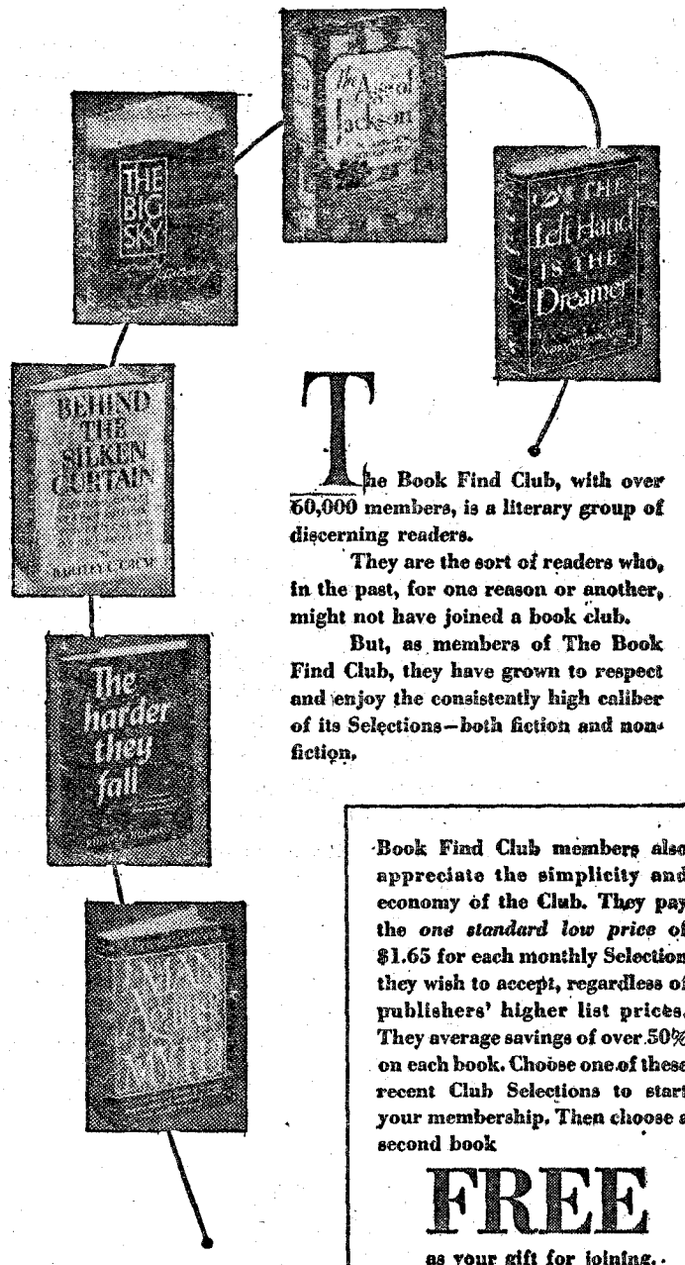

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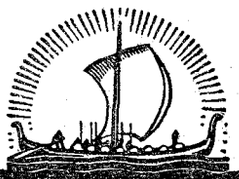

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cles and newspaper editorials, it does not deal merely with some immediate facet of the story; it tells it whole, and, with a grace that will keep readers interested in the details of a tragedy of neglect, exploitation, and preventable devastation which they might otherwise be tempted to abandon as too "difficult." (A better map in later editions also would help.)

Mr. Terral, whose qualification for this work was heightened by service on the TVA staff in Knoxville before joining that of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, outstanding crusader for MVA, has not oversimplified his book. Instead, he has written a series of chapters on the various sub-problems which flow together like the Big Muddy's tributaries to create the Missouri Valley problem. After a deft introduction to the errant river itself he really begins with the land and the over-exploitation of its top soil. Consideration of drought and flood brings up a discussion of the unbelievable welter of water laws written by the various states in a desperate attempt to conserve their most valuable asset. Then comes a fascinating chapter on grass, much more helpful in conservation than any statute. Incidentally, the development of buffalo-grass seed at the Hays, Kansas, agricultural experiment station, operated jointly by the Kansas State College and the United States Department of Agriculture, is an outstanding example of the perseverance of underpaid government scientists. Congressmen on the verge of a diatribe against "waste and extravagance" should read it.

The same spirit helped to plant shelter belts in the treeless, semi-arid Western valley, and it developed sorghum as "the corn of the plains." This has a shorter growing season than corn and so can be planted farther north; it does not require as much water; it has 90 per cent of corn's food value; it can be fed to cattle, hogs, and other livestock. It has been manna to South Dakota—whose farmers met in 1934 to discuss "whether it was possible any longer to make a living from farming" in the state.

From the research men, too, come suggestions for the industries which the valley needs to stabilize its economy—wool manufacturing; leather working; fiber, plastics, and building materials from wheat, corn, potatoes, and other field produce; grain alcohol, which, as was demonstrated during the war, could well replace high-octane gasoline as an efficient motor fuel; the phosphates which the soil needs; lignite, manganese, electrochemicals, and electrometallurgicals.

But there is no staying away from the river. It flows through the land and all its problems and possibilities. There is, for example, no chance for industries without power; and the river holds the power—in its narrow mountain reaches rather than where it wanders between wide banks to its mouth. It holds the possibility of cheap transportation, too. This has hardly been realized through the Army Engineers' channel-dredging, but Mr. Terral cites the advantages of the TVA's system of slack-water pools even though he is aware of its costliness. It is much less wasteful of water than the army's constant stream, a point of importance in a valley which needs irrigation and in which water is none too abundant. This must seem paradoxical to outsiders who hear only of the Missouri's floods. The trouble is that 60 per cent of the river's entire flow is discharged in May, June, and July. Certainly, the engineers' levees do nothing to change this.

So one comes back again to ignorance—or at least to an amazing lack of cooperation. Even the men who have worked hardest to meet the valley's needs confess that they are not working as a team. Said one: "We found a lot of good research going on, but in a good many instances work done in Utah and Wyoming was not known by the institutions of Colorado, not to mention the fact that it was not known by the people who live in those states." This alone is a decisive argument in favor of the MVA idea rather than the so-called Pick-Sloan plan, which would do precious little to wipe out frustrating divisions of interest and authority. Despite the propaganda of politically influential interests, coordination under a single authority of the efforts to solve the region's varied problems is essential. Mr. Terral's book makes this clearer than ever, and one hopes that it will be widely read—especially in the valley of the Missouri, where "the need to know" must be met to arouse the will to act.

ERNEST KIRSCHTEN

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Jeremiah from Massachusetts

AMERICA'S ECONOMIC SUPREMACY. By Brooks Adams. With a New Evaluation by Marquis W. Childs. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

WHEN first published in 1900, this book attracted some attention in Europe but fell completely flat in America. With eyes turned inward on their own prosperity, the author's fellow-citizens viewed his prophecies of British decline and his warnings of a coming struggle between the United States and Russia for economic control of Asia as just another example of Adamsian eccentricity.

Today, when many Americans are obsessed by the idea of inevitable conflict with Russia, the danger is that the once-neglected words of the Massachusetts prophet will be swallowed without the pinch of salt which subsequent events have provided. Adams often described the shape of things to come with amazing accuracy, but his vision was sometimes blurred, and in particular he failed to see how far history would outmode his prescriptions for action. He was right enough in condemning the absurdities of isolationism, but his alternative—imperialism, nineteenth-century style—is, as Marquis Childs points out in his thoughtful "evaluation," equally unrealistic today.

Brooks Adams, brother of Henry, great-grandson of the second President, was a philosophical historian. In 1895 he published his best-known book, "Law of Civilization and Decay," in which he developed the thesis that the center of trade—the point where the products of the East exchanged for those of the West—had hitherto moved in a westerly direction from Babylonia to Byzantium and thence to Venice and Amsterdam. With the downfall of Napoleon, that center had been firmly established in London, and a new world equilibrium had been achieved based on the concentration of economic power at that point.

Three events at the end of the nineteenth century led Adams to believe that this equilibrium was being destroyed and to write this book projecting the operation of his "law" into the future. They were the Spanish-American War, the Boer War, and the Boxer uprising, and in his belief their causes were closely related. The contest between the United States and Spain was brought on by the collapse in sugar prices that began when Britain, following free-trade principles, opened its markets to subsidized European beet sugar. That destroyed the prosperity of the West Indies just as repeal of the Corn Laws ruined British farming. In the English appetite for cheap food Adams saw signs of decadence; it was the cause of Britain's steadily mounting trade deficit and its forced liquidation of American investments following the Baring panic of 1893. This led, in turn, to the Boer War, which Britain fought to obtain control of a badly needed new source of income—the Rand mines. The dismal showing of the British forces in South Africa seemed to Adams the final proof of the deterioration of British character: too high living had resulted in mental and physical inertia.

England's difficulties with the Boers gave a green light to its Continental rivals. In particular, Russia, facing the alternative of expansion or revolution, intensified its efforts to get control of China and its mineral wealth, provoking the Chinese resistance that culminated in the Boxer outbreak. Here was evidence, said Adams, that the old equilibrium was destroyed: "The center of the economic system of civilization is in motion, and until it once more comes to rest, tranquillity cannot return."

Adams had a low opinion of Russian organizing ability and did not believe Russia was capable of exploiting China's resources on its own. What he feared was a Russo-German combination which would dominate Eurasia and exclude the United States from Far Eastern markets. That, he insisted, would be a highly dangerous development for America, whose ever-growing industrial surplus required wider and wider foreign outlets. Unless it wished to resign itself to stagnation, the United States would be forced to compete for "the seat of empire." But that required a governmental organization equal to "the weight it must support and the friction it must endure; and it is the perfecting of this organization, both military and civil, which must be the task of the next fifty years."

Brooks Adams was an economic determinist, but his determinism seems to have been inspired by the pseudo-Dar-

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winism of Herbert Spencer rather than by "Das Kapital." Thus he said in one passage: "Nature is omnipotent, and nations must flow with the tide. Whither the exchanges flow, they must follow." But if a fatalist he was also a moralist. He scolded the British for their over-indulgence and the Americans for wastefulness and unwillingness to modernize their government.

By implication, therefore, he left some scope for free will. The triumph of the East was not foreordained; energy and foresight might win the center of economic power for the Western Hemisphere. Could the prize be secured without war? Adams was not explicit on this point, but clearly he was not one to shrink from armed conflict—the final test of who was fittest to survive. With all his prescience, he did not foresee the deadly developments of modern science. But we who are agonizingly aware of them, while we cannot shut our eyes to the grim realities of the struggle for power between East and West, must strive to restore global equilibrium by means that do not involve suicide.

KEITH HUTCHISON

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Asia's Revolution and Its Leaders

THE REVOLT OF ASIA. By Robert Payne. The John Day Company. $3.50.

ROBERT PAYNE, poet and novelist, in "The Revolt of Asia" has turned to political reporting, and his book offers a fresh and challenging approach to the understanding of social change in Asia. His method is to take us into the mental climate of Asia's leaders, which he reconstructs by a brilliant and intuitive use of the details of their careers and especially their own writings. As a biographer of lives rather than a journalist of events, Payne seeks in these revolutionary leaders the springs of their action. The result is tremendously illuminating, though it can also be misleading unless we keep constantly in mind that we are looking at these men on their own terms, as they see themselves.

In brief, Payne finds that Shjarir, Nehru, Mao Tse-tung, and other Asiatic leaders have faced a common problem—how to win independence of Western domination, lead their peoples by means of new democratic institutions, and remake the agrarian economy of Asia's peasant masses. In their various attacks upon this vast problem Payne finds overtones of the American Declaration of Independence far more often than the accents of the Comintern, Washington more of a hero than Lenin, greater concern for social democracy than for communism, more American influence than Russian. Far from being extremists ripe for totalitarianism, these revolutionists, he believes, are primarily reformers seeking a new Asian brand of socialism, inspired by the concept of the Rights of Man and the potentialities of Western technology.

This thesis has not before been so convincingly stated. Mr. Stassen should take note. If these mass movements of India, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and North China aim at national and individual freedom, and use socialist methods because they are too poor to use private enterprise as their path of development, are we well advised to denounce their socialism? Must the super-powers try to polarize every village in the rice paddies of half the world, or can Asia's new mass movements form a neutral element and remain third parties in world politics?

Payne seeks an answer by studying the individual leaders, their early struggles, their pronouncements, their responses to defeat and victory, their philosophies. He begins with Indonesia—Soekarno, Shjarir, Sjarifoedin—but especially Shjarir, the young Dutch-educated lawyer from Sumatra whose pamphlet, "Indonesia's Fight," written in October, 1945, espouses civil liberties and free elections and "provides the intellectual basis for the whole of the Asiatic revolt." Shjarir, says Payne, is a preeminent technician of revolution—a realist but humane and anti-militarist, a socialist leader relying on sentiments of nationalism, democracy, and cultural revival and, "unlike Mao Tse-tung, not obsessed with Marxist doctrine." Quite as much as Nehru or Mao, Shjarir has formulated Asia's problem of change in the broadest terms:

> The West itself . . . knew that the application of knowledge and technique could have fatal results if at the same time moral standards were allowed to be overthrown. The chaotic condition existing among the world powers with all that it implies [annihilation by the atomic bomb] arises from man's self-doubt and from the lack of inner moral resistance.
>
> The essential task of the modern man today, whether he comes from the East or the West, is to rescue himself from this abyss by endeavoring to fix again his known position . . . his destination in the cosmos. In all this he must be led by standards of truth, beauty, and kindness, which form together the components of human dignity. These universal values are today no monopoly of the East, nor of the West.

Turning to India, Payne analyzes the personalities and aspirations of Gandhi and Nehru, of Jinnah—whose "smile resembles the gleam on the handles of a coffin"—of Prakash Narain, the Socialist, and many others, and recounts the rise of Congress and the little-publicized Indian revolt of 1942. He shows a novelist's extraordinary facility in the interpretation of character and of national psychology: the motifs of anarchism, penance, and fatalism in the thought of Gandhi, the sense of mass frustration which has haunted modern India. Much of this is intuitive reconstruction by the author. His details are not always accurate (Ting Hsien is not

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in Hunan), and his transliteration of names is incredibly sloppy. Yet his portrait of Asia is built up out of a wealth of information and an intellectual grasp of the cultural revolution which few journalists have shown. "England," he says, "failed in India not so much by its indifference to the cry for independence, but because it tacitly acknowledged a social system that had lost its usefulness, and contrived nothing to put in its place."

From this standpoint of cultural values Payne discusses China, where he spent the war years, and illumines again the startling contrast between Chiang Kai-shek's "China's Destiny" and Mao Tse-tung's "New Democracy." He notes the absurdities and distortions of the Generalissimo's amazing book—"uneasy, theoretical, jejeune . . . terrifying to people who are actively concerned with the social and industrial reconstruction of China. . . . This is Confucius himself attempting vainly to speak about a world of machines, . . . the spiritual bankruptcy of the Confucians faced with the nascent industrialism of China." Under Chiang and Chen Li-fu the Kuomintang has become increasingly a party, "not of the people, but of the secret police"; this echoes the protests of China's student class.

On the other hand, says Payne, the Chinese Communist program, for all its Marxist trappings, has been a genuine continuation of the program of Sun Yat-sen. Mao's "New Democracy" has been Asia's first "blueprint of agrarian reform and democratic government" in which "communism is thrown overboard . . . in favor of a restricted capitalist-socialist state." Rather than the subservient eastern wing of Russia's bid for Eurasiatic hegemony, the Chinese Communists, Payne suggests, are the northeastern tip of a great belt of agrarian social revolution stretching from the Middle East around through India, Burma, Indonesia, and Annam to North China. Payne's conclusion is worth pondering:

> Of one thing we can be reasonably certain: the Chinese Communists represent the Chinese peasants and have a passionate belief in the peasants' potentialities. Ignorant of industry and diplomacy, incapable of understanding the complexities of Western civilization, so secluded within their own valleys that they suffer from a kind of mental inbreeding, and so accustomed to fighting continual battles on all fronts that they are suspicious of strangers, they represent to a degree unknown elsewhere in the East the birth of a new social system in Asia. Chinese communism is not an end product; it is a seed that has still to flower, and no one knows what shape the flower will assume.

However much it may over-interpret Asia's leaders or by-pass phenomena like the Chinese Communists' party-line propaganda, "The Revolt of Asia" does an enormous service in illustrating two essential points: first, that the tradition of the American War of Independence and the Rights of Man is indeed a dynamic factor in the minds and hearts of many Asiatics; second, that Asia's revolutionists must work for their own peoples within their own traditions, which are not those of the U. S. A. or the U. S. S. R. They face urgent local problems and must take whatever foreign ideas and technology are suited to their needs. They cannot afford to be doctrinaire or polarized.

I am not sure whether, as Robert Payne contends, Indonesia really has the economic and social resources for a degree of Asiatic leadership, or whether Southeast Asia can actually avoid nationalist Balkanization and move toward federation, or whether cooperatives and land reform have a chance to beat out the concentration of economic power in the hands of landlords, industrialists, and bureaucrats, or whether it is really meaningful to say that the Asiatic century has begun. But in this time when the world seeks to evaluate man's place in a new social order, it is immensely heartening to have so penetrating a glimpse into the minds of Asiatic leaders who think in terms we can understand. More than any other book, "The Revolt of Asia" conveys the spirit of Asia's social revolution.

JOHN K. FAIRBANK

The following reviews, announced for this issue, will appear next week:

JUSTUS BUCHLER: Jean-Paul Sartre's "Existentialism" and William Barrett's "What Is Existentialism?"

DIANA TRILLING: Fiction in Review.

GEORGE S. COUNTS: Louis Fischer's "Gandhi and Stalin."

Old Dramas, New Versions

GREEK PLAYS IN MODERN TRANSLATION. Edited with an Introduction by Dudley Fitts. The Dial Press. $5.

FOR one little thing, to begin with, it is a pleasure to pick up a book in which quotations from the Greek have been proofread with some care, including the matter of accents.

Here are eleven plays by the three great tragic dramatists: Aeschylus is represented by the "Agamemnon," the "Eumenides," and "Prometheus Bound"; Sophocles by the "Electra," the "Antigone," the "Oedipus Rex," and "Oedipus at Colonus"; Euripides by "The Trojan Women," the "Medea," the "Hippolytus," and the "Alcestis."

The editor, seeking for variety of translator as well as of author, has brought into this collection the work of nine translators. Judged as literature, whether prose or verse, rather than for a literal accuracy in following the original, the translations are of varying excellence, thus carrying the editor's principle perhaps farther than he intended. Mr. Lattimore's translations of two plays of Aeschylus, "Agamemnon" and "Prometheus Bound," are the finest in the collection, and this is said with all due respect to the excellent version of "King Oedipus" by William Butler Yeats. Mr. Fergusson does handsomely if not nobly by Sophocles's "Electra"; and Mr. Fitz-

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gerald, himself a poet, does very well by "Oedipus at Colonus," though some of the choral passages seem a little more Euripidean than Sophoclean. Collaborating with the editor, Mr. Fitzgerald also presents translations of Sophocles's "Antigone" and Euripides's "Alcestis"; particularly in the first of these, while there is a good deal of dramatic variety in the metrics, there is a bit of theatricalism in the stage directions and general mise-en-scène. Miss Hamilton's rendering of the "Prometheus Bound" seems not quite up to the superlatives claimed for it by the editor; the blank verse is a little inflexible, sometimes on the dull side; not nearly so much so as the Grene and Thomson treatments of the "Eumenides" and "Hippolytus." As for Mr. Prokosch, poor Mr. Prokosch! He has been so roundly and so often scolded for the lushness and softness of his own verse that here he seems to have attempted to write the barest, the starkest prose imaginable. The results are really quite funny. He does not, exactly, have Medea remark: "Good Heavens! I wish I did not have to go into the house and murder my two children," but he comes mighty close.

Mr. Fitts's introduction makes some sound points, tells some home truths, and has the virtue of enthusiasm with the defect of diffuseness. He really does enjoy the classics, as distinguished from regarding them as a solemn duty; and if he sometimes coos or twitters a bit, those sounds, at least, are pleasanter than braying. Some of the translators discuss their methods, or explain difficult points in the original dramas, in commentaries which are to be found in an appendix. There is, in addition, a useful and thorough Index of Names.

Fifty years from now most of the plays, not all, in this collection will have to be retranslated to satisfy the taste of an editor who feels that every age should have its own translations, and that these will no longer suit the public ear. The present collection should do very nicely pro tem; as Mr. Fitts says, the work is offered "for the time being." ROLFE HUMPHRIES

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Verse Chronicle

THE AGE OF ANXIETY" (Random House, $2.50) is the worst thing Auden has written since "The Dance of Death"; it is the equivalent of Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Sonnets." The man who, during the thirties, was one of the five or six best poets in the world, has gradually turned into a rhetoric-mill grinding away at the bottom of Limbo, into an automaton that keeps making little jokes, little plays on words, little rhetorical engines, as compulsively and unendingly and uneasily as a neurotic washes his hands. A poet has turned into a sack of reflexes: Auden no longer has to struggle against standard tricks, set idiosyncracies, behavior adjustments aged into obssessive behavior—it is these that write his poems.

Most of "The Age of Anxiety" is supposed to be thought or said by four different characters, but they are only four chairs in which Auden takes turns sitting: always the same old voice saying the same old thing. "The Age of Anxiety" is "about" the Seven Ages of Man, landscapes, war, God, everything, anything; after all, if you treat everything alike, any subject is as good as any other, and you might as well give yourself room for completely free association. If a boat is torpedoed and the men die, it's just one more chance for rhetoric; all you need do is make your regular plays on words, write

They swallowed and sank, ceased thereafter
To appear in public; exposed to snap
Judgments of sharks, to vague inquiries
Of amoeboid monsters, mobbed by slight
Unfriendly fry . . .

Page after page the poem keeps saying: *Remember, the real subject* of *poetry is words.* One understands what Auden meant when he said, in a recent review, that all art is so essentially frivolous that he prefers it to embody beliefs he thinks false, since its frivolity would degrade those he thinks true. What sounds like an indictment is a confession, and "The Age of Anxiety" is the evidence that substantiates the confession. Underneath the jokes and fantasies and sermons there is a chaotic, despairing, exhausted confusion about the poem; all its moral sentiments are solemn, hollow whistles in the dark, all its frivolity is the frivolity of a world in which everything is dying away into a senseless dream, "self in self steeped and pashed—quite./ Disremembering, disremembering all now."

Some of the rhetoric in "The Age of Anxiety" is an extravagantly accomplished and professional job, and there are even gleams of Auden, the real Auden, here and there among its manufactured, irrelevant pages; but most of it is mediocre and much of it is abominable—dreary facetiousness that would embarrass a comedian on the radio:

. . . Listen courteously to us
Four reformers who have founded—why not?—
The Gung-Ho Group, the Ganymede Club
For homesick young angels, the Arctic League
Of Tropical Fish, the Tomboy Fund
For Blushing Brides and the Bide-a-wees
Of Sans-Souci, assembled again
For a Think-Fest . . .

The critic who says what I have said about "The Age of Anxiety" is more or less in the position of the little boy who watched the emperor's new clothes go shivering by; but believe me, reader, that morning coat, that rich and modest necktie, that simple but assertive pin, are nothing but delusions of the reviewers, occupational phantasmagoria of people who are reviewing not one bad poem by Auden, but Auden. Auden was, and is potentially, one of the best poets on earth; if it weren't for this "The Age of Anxiety" would be worth neither indignation nor dismay, but only a line or two of indifferent dismissal.

It is wonderful to have some translations of Corbière published ("Poems," by Tristan Corbière, translated by Walter McElroy, Banyan Press, $3); I am so fond of him that I would willingly persuade Margaret Truman to sing

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"Cris d'aveugles" on a Sunday Evening Fireside Chat if it would get him a few more readers. No poet of half his greatness is so underrated and unread. Mr. McElroy's translations are fond but, sometimes, foolish; there are horrible mistakes and additions, and the translator is not poet enough to keep within miles of Corbière in all the extraordinary passages that raise one's eyebrows or make one's hair stand on end. Mr. McElroy mistakenly decided to rhyme his translations, and he has a complaisance toward rhymes that beats anything that I, a liberal enough rhymer, have ever imagined: he will turn that line of lines, *Tu sais: j'avais laché la Vie avec des gants,* into *Letting go of life, you know, I wore gloves: those I kept*—in order to have *kept* rhyme with *best! Calme plat* means *dead calm,* is translated *calm expanse; de travers* becomes *with stately tread; Oui, j'ai beau me palper* becomes *I do well to pinch myself; Tu voulais voir à mon front* becomes *You saw reflected in my face;* and so on and so on. And the translator has a distressing habit of missing or disregarding Corbière's jokes: after smiling at *Un barbet qui dormait sous le nom de Fidèle,* one finds that the fairies have left in its cradle *this* sad bump on a log: *A water-spaniel fond of sleeping, named Trusty.* Later, *Nous nous mettrons au vert du paradis perdu* becomes, *We'll find our way to the green of the lost paradise*—but Corbière has said something far better, since *mettre des chevaux au vert* is an idiom meaning *to put horses out to graze.*

Pound called Corbière the most touching of poets, and Laforgue said, with wistful love, that his poems are *strident and unwearying as the cry of the sea-gulls:* "We others are all *poetic.* . . . He is of a different mettle: an unseizable smoke-dried corsair, bold in his raids." Corbière's range is incredible: it is as if you learned that the same man had written "Moby Dick" and "Prufrock," and had then retired to make public appearances under the name of Groucho Marx. Many of Corbière's lines, in their short finality, might have been extracted from the "Sayings of Spartans"—their objects have a stubborn and thingy violence that beats even Robert Lowell— but there are plenty of other lines that put S. J. Perelman to shame, consummately reckless rhetorical passages in which the poet's mocking consciousness of what he is doing is half their effect on the reader:

Nature awakening—in her awakening burst loose—
Dropping her white sheet . . . puts out my chimney.
Look, my nightingales! . . . nightingales of the tornado—
Gay as larks—wailing like screech-owls!
My weathercock, way up there, rubs the rust off his yodel,
And you can hear my Aeolian door lamenting
As did Saint Anthony in his temptation . . .

"Cris d'aveugles" is full of an agony you have to go to the "terrible sonnets" to match; it would be hard to match anywhere the disgust and contempt and identifying acceptance of a poem like "Femme"; the neurotic self-dramatizing self-analysis of some of the dramatic monologues is quite as good as anything of the sort in Eliot—whom Corbière influenced, mostly through Laforgue; and there is everything in the world, one almost fancies, in "Le Poète contumace" and "La Rapsode foraine."

All bad popular poems have this in common: they are lies—and hopeful lies at that. Corbière is far too serious a poet ever to be solemn: what he says he means; but he says it in a series of wonderfully colloquial and idiomatic exclamations—his speech is a sort of living contradiction. Puns, mocking half-dead metaphors, parodied clichés, antitheses and paradoxes, idioms exploited on every level, are the seven-league crutches on which the poems bound wildly forward. If nature, once, made no jumps, it was different from Corbière, who progresses by nothing else; one of his poems passes through its aggregation of exclamations, interjections, vocatives, imperatives as an electron passes through its orbits—now here, now there, and in between nowhere.

There is nobody else so close to Villon. Corbière does equal justice both to what we want and what we get; his wonderful strength and toughness and irony come through a conclusive realization of emotion and spirit, not through any escape from either. (How sentimental, what a hothouse milkweed, a good tough writer like Hemingway seems in comparison!) Corbière's own epitaph ends:

Il mourut en s'attendant vivre
Et vécut s'attendant mourir.

He lived and died catercornered, *de travers*—obsessed not just by the hard way but by the hardest way; he is a rock set against all the currents of the world. RANDALL JARRELL

Drama

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"THE HEIRESS" (Biltmore Theater) is described on the program as suggested by Henry James's novel "Washington Square." That phrase claims for the authors, Ruth and Augustus Goetz, all the latitude anyone could wish, and the result is certainly a good deal more satisfactory than dramatizations usually are. To some it may seem that the play is a bit old-fashioned in manner as well as setting, but it does manage both to capture something of the mood created by a Jamesian situation and at the same time to provide for those sudden crises without which the subtlest atmospheric effects leave a theater audience unsatisfied.

Basil Rathbone plays the role of one of those splendidly cold and arrogant Victorian fathers whom one might find it difficult to believe in if Jane Austen had not anticipated them and if Victorian literature did not take them almost as a matter of course. He hates—though naturally he does not admit the fact even to himself—the daughter whose birth killed her mother, and it is this hatred which is responsible for the daughter's awkwardness and timidity. From his point of view he is angelically patient with her defects; from hers he is a perpetual reminder of the fact that no one will ever love or want her. He is terribly right when he undertakes to

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protect her from the advances of an obvious fortune hunter, but he does not even attempt to find a way of exposing the latter's character without at the same time suggesting the obvious implication: "No one could possibly want you except for your money." Hence, though the fortune hunter finally exposes himself, his intended victim never hates him in the same way that she hates her father, for the false lover at least pretended that she could be imagined to be desirable.

The last scene of the play, the one in which the heroine calmly bars the door against her lover after she has led him to suppose that she is about to elope with him, is perhaps theatrical in the bad sense of the term. A novelist would find it easier to suggest without the use of so obvious an incident the fact that the girl is not only renouncing this particular suitor but also all hope of anything but a lonely life. Even a more skilful playwright might have found a less melodramatic single scene to convey the same thing. But this is the only occasion on which the theatrical invention is disturbingly forced, and as a whole the play achieves what it intends. That it does so is certainly in no small part due to the extremely resourceful performance of Wendy Hiller, who is called upon to make clear, convincing, and moving at least three things: the shy awkwardness of the unloved daughter; her intense, desperate, and reckless passion when she allows herself briefly to believe that she is loved; and, finally, the proud, stoical acceptance of a life which will be physically comfortable, even dignified and almost splendid, but also completely empty. Patricia Collinge as a silly, romantic poor relation also gives a very telling performance.

Despite the recently renewed vogue of Henry James, the sorrow of the rich is not at the moment a very popular subject. Perhaps what I meant when I said that "The Heiress" might seem to some old-fashioned is simply that it is concerned with nothing except the character and the emotions of private individuals, and that today many persons, even among those who do not profess any rigid dogma, tend to believe that no work of literature which does not imply pretty directly some social or political conclusions can "mean anything." For all I know the future may be theirs. A hundred years hence a personally unhappy heiress may seem to most people as profitless a subject as, let us say, that special sort of conflict between love and honor which the seventeenth century found so unaccountably fascinating. But for me at least the time has not yet come, and I find occasional plays like this not only restful but a bit of a relief.

For those who do not agree with me perhaps "Our Lan'" (Royale Theater) should be recommended, even though I had waited all through the first act for the appearance of the hero I thought promised by the title before it burst upon me that "Lan'" is poetical Negro dialect for "Land." If the work in question had been treated as ballet, as opera, or as pageant, the highly idealized story of a group of recently freed slaves who established a primitively communistic community on an island off the Georgia coast just after the Civil War might have come off. In the present form, which seems to hesitate between realism and fancy, it fails—in my opinion at least, though not in that of all the reviewers—to be credible in any way. A few of the tableaux are pictorially effective, and a good many familiar spirituals are well sung, which may be enough for those who can never get enough of the latter. Even so, however, one might expect as experienced a director as Eddie Dowling to devise some less awkward way of bringing them in and to avoid such obvious false notes as that struck in the tableau where a Union officer reverently bows his uncovered head when, as usual, the colonists react to a bit of news by bursting into well-coordinated song. Worst of all, "Our Lan" is cursed with some of the most improbable dialogue since "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I do not profess to know what sort of idiom freed slaves actually employed, but presumably they talked in some manner recognizably human, not like the members of a Rogers Group that had been wired for sound.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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Records

B. H. HAGGIN

MOZART'S Piano Concerto K.450, one of the finest of the series, which has been unavailable on records since RCA Victor discontinued the recording of Elly Ney's performance, has now been recorded for English Decca by Kathleen Long with the National Symphony under Boyd Neel (Set ED-25; $7). I wish I could report that the performance is what the work deserves; but I'm afraid I can recommend it only as the half a loaf that is better than none at all. There were details in Ney's performance—distentions of tempo—that I came to dislike; but they were occasional excesses in a sharply contoured performance in which one heard the operation of a strong musical mind and personality. Miss Long's playing, on the other hand, is colorless, contourless, and characterless, and she doesn't even achieve smooth, clear execution of the passagework. On a wide-range machine the sound of the performance is fairly good—the orchestra a little sharp, the piano occasionally distorted; on a machine of limited range the piano is very dull.

I am aware of, and impressed by, the pianistic and musical gifts exhibited by William Kapell in the recorded performance of Beethoven's Concerto No. 2 issued by Victor (Set 1132; $5); but I am aware also of the nervous excitement that he injects into the work and that doesn't belong there. And I am all the more aware of it after hearing, over WQXR, the performance that Schnabel recently recorded in England, and that Victor will not issue here—a performance made enchanting by its lightness of touch, relaxed ease, and matured mastery. The orchestral part in the Kapell performance is well done by the N. B. C. Symphony under Golschmann, and is well balanced with the piano by the excellent recording.

Victor also has issued what Henri Casadesus has called his arrangement of a viola concerto that he has attributed to Handel (Set 1131; $4). It is an agreeable work, which is played with unsubtle straightforwardness—and, in the first movement, with a little too much vigor—by Primrose and an orchestra under Weissmann; and the performance is excellently reproduced.

From Columbia have come two of Debussy's last instrumental works—the Sonata No. 2 for flute, viola, and harp, played by John Wummer, Milton Katims, and Laura Newell (Set X-282; $3.35—i.e., $1.25 for each record and $.85 for the album, these prices including the tax), and the Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano, played by Francescatti and Casadesus (Set X-280; $3.35). Listening to No. 3 again after a long interval I am more sharply aware of the elaborateness of the manipulation of subtle sonorities and figurations, the assured expertness and refinement of workmanship with which it is achieved; but I still find it an elaborate manipulation of mere stylistic mannerisms and formulas that leaves me indifferent. And in No. 2 not even the manipulation is impressive. The performances and their reproduction are very good—the sound of the violin and the piano being the best I have heard from American Columbia records.

Among several Columbia volumes of vocal recordings is one (Set 691; $4.60) of arias from Rossini's "La Cenerentola," "L'Italiana in Algieri," "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," and "Semiramide," sung by Jennie Tourel, mezzo-soprano, with dazzling beauty of vocal tone (marred only by occasional tremolo), brilliant agility, and delightful musical style. No such style is heard in the orchestral accompaniments conducted by Cimara, the sound of which on a wide-range machine is a little sharp.

Another (Set X-283; $3.35) offers four arias of Bach—the *Qui sedes* and *Agnus Dei* from the B minor Mass, the *Et exultavit* and *Esurientes* from the Magnificat—beautifully sung by Carol Brice, contralto. The orchestral accompaniments conducted by Saidenberg are adequate—except that in *Esurientes* the combination of the two flutes over the single bass-notes sounds very bare without the chords that Bach intended to be filled in by a keyboard instrument. Again the recorded sound of the orchestra is a little sharp on a wide-range machine. And perhaps I should add that I find these arias rather dull.

Another (Set 696; $4.60) offers the fine tenor voice of Raoul Jobin in the impressive Invocation to Nature from Berlioz's "Damnation of Faust" and the lovely *O, Paradis* from Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine," together with arias from Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" and Massenet's "Werther," "Manon," and "Hérodiade." Orchestral accompaniments conducted by Pelletier are good and well reproduced.

Still another (Set 689; $4.60) offers a group of French songs—Fauré's "Les Roses d'Ispahan" and "Après un rêve," Duparc's "L'Invitation au voyage," Bachelet's "Chère nuit," and four by Milhaud to texts by Ronsard—sung by Lily Pons with orchestral accompaniments conducted by Abravanel and Kostelanetz. Neither the songs nor the Pons crystalline tones are anything I care for. The performances are well reproduced.

And still another (Set 634; $5.85), finally, offers the Rome Narrative from Wagner's "Tannhäuser," the Grail Narrative and Farewell from "Lohengrin," *Fanget an, Am stillen Herd,* and the Prize Song from "Die Meistersinger," and *Nur eine Waffe taugt* from "Parsifal," sung by the tenor Torsten Ralf sonorously but also with occasional strain, especially in high notes. The orchestral accompaniments conducted by Fritz Busch are excellent; and the performances are well reproduced.

Concord Recordings has sent me a replacement for the defective record in the set of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier that I reviewed recently. The performance of Prelude and Fugue No. 2 is good; the price of the set is $6.85.

CONTRIBUTORS

WALLACE STEVENS is the author of several books of verse. His latest volume, "Transport to Summer," was published in the spring.

LOUISE BOGAN, poetry critic of the *New Yorker,* is the author of "Poems and New Poems" and other books of verse.

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Letters to the Editors

Communists Can Be Right

Dear Sirs: Continuing the argument with Alfred Baker Lewis in the September 6 issue I should like to add a few words for Mr. Lewis's benefit and that of other liberals.

For thirty-five years I have been a follower of the socialist and liberal philosophy, part of the time as a member of the Socialist Party and part of the time as just a plain liberal. For twenty years I read a great deal of Trotskyist literature, and as a result my sympathies were with him in his fight with Stalin. So you see I have no Stalinist taint, but I certainly am disgusted with most of the Socialists and liberals.

Why must the Communists always be wrong? It looks as if they might accidentally be right now and then, but not according to the liberals. No government in the world at present suits me, but let us look at the record of the Socialists in Europe. Before the war they were everywhere overthrown by the right after compromising with it. In France, much as I admire Léon Blum, they are conducting an imperialistic war in Indo-China, trying to hold on to their empire, and again compromising with the right domestically, preparing the way for De Gaulle.

The British Labor Party, perhaps the most intelligent socialist party in Europe, is doing fairly well at home, but its foreign policy is a mass of contradictions. In Greece it is rotten, bad in Germany and South Africa, and intolerable when it caters to Franco in Spain and to Portugal. I have great hopes for the Labor Party in England, but I am not sure the threat of fascism is over there yet.

Of course, all is not black or white on either the Communist or the Socialist side; both have made many mistakes, but I certainly go down the line with Del Vayo in trying to get the workers to cooperate to prevent a resurrection of fascism in Europe. From my reading I judge that the Communists in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France are the nearest right of all groups in those countries. The Communists, like other groups, vary in different countries.

Here the reactionaries have the liberals and labor leaders so scared that they lean over backward to try to keep from being called Communist. Perhaps because Communists are such rare birds in Texas I am just a little skeptical when I read about the Communists getting control of this or that liberal organization or union. In my union if anyone opposes the group in the saddle, he is called a "Commie." Besides, as I said before, the Communists might be right sometimes. I am not so sure as I used to be. J. HAYDEN MOORE, SR.

Midlothian, Tex., October 5

"Dear Mr. Hoover . . ."

Dear Sirs: Following is the text of a letter sent last year to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. Since my position must parallel that of thousands of other Americans, perhaps it would do us all good to expose it now to public examination:

Since the FBI has recently been making its periodic check-up on me—the fifth of which I happen to know—it might save your time if I gave you my record once and for all.

I was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, February 6, 1887, and have lived in Greater Boston ever since I was two and a half years old. I received my S. B. in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1909, and practiced my profession until 1918, when, like practically every architect in the country, I was put out of business by the First World War. The following have been my major activities since then:

I campaigned for woman suffage—then considered "radical" and "red," but now universally acknowledged right.

I worked against American isolationism and for international understanding, organization, and peace. Now we are a leading member of the U. N.

I was secretary of the Boston Chapter of the American League Against War and Fascism, which advocated a purchasers' boycott against Germany and international official action to stop Hitler and Mussolini while they were still weak enough to be stopped without war. The FBI considered it "red." Over 300,000 dead Americans prove it was right.

I helped raise relief for the legal, democratically elected Spanish Republican government during the civil war, in the agonized conviction that unless we took that opportunity to stop Hitler's and Mussolini's plan for world conquest in its earliest aggression, a world war was inevitable. History has demonstrated how terribly right I was. Even the State Department now proclaims that Franco was a collaborator with the Axis.

I advocated a boycott of oil and scrap iron to Japan, to stop Japanese aggression in China. Pearl Harbor and every American dead in the Pacific prove I was right.

I am on the board of the Boston chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to fight against second-class citizenship for one-tenth of my fellow-Americans. The Declaration of Independence declares, "All men are created equal." Does the FBI consider this subversive?

I have for years been vice-chairman of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. Is defending the Bill of Rights subversive? Since my forefathers fought to establish the nation as a free country, my grandfather served as a member of Congress during the Civil War to maintain it free, and one of my great uncles as Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts strove to maintain its legal freedom, I feel that I should also do my share to defend the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

In this conviction I have tried to fight every attack on the liberties of every American. I have therefore been active in the Angelo Herndon case, the Scottsboro frame-up, and similar cases too numerous to mention.

Since denial of any voice in their own government is the supreme denial of freedom and democracy, I have fought the disfranchisement of ten million American citizens by a poll tax barring them from the ballot box.

While I am not, and never have been a Communist, I have publicly defended the constitutional right of any American to hold any political and economic views his conscience dictates. Freedom of conscience, thought, speech, and political action are fundamental American constitutional rights. To deny them is subversive; to defend them, the duty of an American.

I myself believe that the capitalist system, based on the motive of private greed, has run its historical course and that our present economic oligarchy must give way to economic democracy to match our political democracy. (Article V is as valid a part of the Constitution as any other article.) If I had believed

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that the Communist Party was the best instrument to bring about that forward step I should have joined it publicly, as was my American right.

I am an officer of Local 3, United Office and Professional Workers of America, C.I.O. As at least 100,000,000 Americans are workers or members of workers' families, the labor organizations which fight for the welfare of the working people are fighting for the welfare of the bulk of the American people, organized or unorganized. Moreover, as industry cannot operate unless its products can be sold, organized labor, in fighting today to sustain the purchasing power of the American people, is the greatest force now operating to save us from a depression worse than that of 1929. Surely not a subversive end!

In the endeavor to broaden my knowledge and understanding and to learn truth and wisdom about the world I live in, rather than form my judgments by

[*Continued on page 430*]

Puzzle Note

WITH this issue we announce the winner of the crossword-puzzle contest which has been running for the last twelve weeks in *The Nation*. The winner—voted for by our readers in the proportion of roughly three to two—is "Mr. Y.," whose real name is Frank W. Lewis.

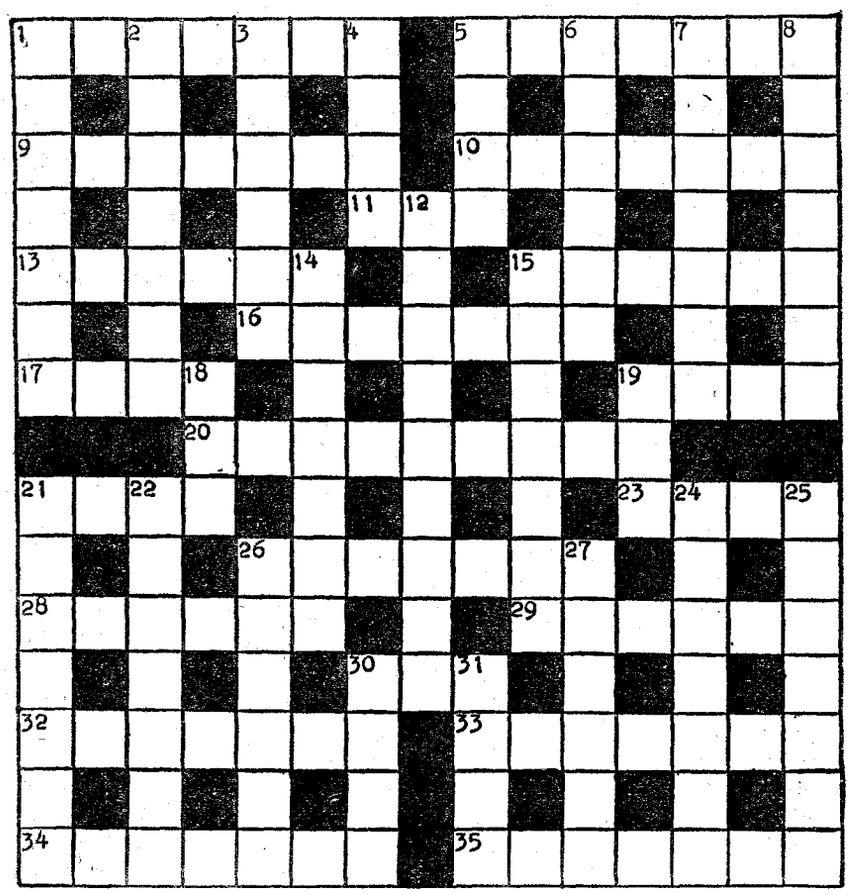
Mr. Lewis, a research analyst for the War Department, writes that he "became a puzzle addict while on a tour of duty in England, where the so-called British Crossword appears in most papers." He then "turned to Jack Barrett [*The Nation's* former puzzle-maker] as the only American whose puzzles held sustained interest." Trying his hand at the same sort of thing, Mr. Lewis has, in the opinion of three-fifths of our readers, attained a technique and flavor approximate to the master's.

For the edification of readers who feel that they ought to be let in on the rules of his distinctive style Mr. Lewis has prepared a "Short Guide to Puzzle-Solving." *The Nation* will be happy to send a mimeographed copy of this "Short Guide" to any reader who requests one.

The many crossword addicts who voted for "Mr. X" may be interested to learn that he is Jack Luzzatto, of the Bronx, a contributor to many newspapers and to several anthologies of puzzles.

Crossword Puzzle No. 233

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 34, for example. (7)
5 It isn't geese who are disturbed by such perils. (7)
9 Do clothes have that hurried look when so tailored? (7)
10 To leave a cigar with this should give it a rakish look. (7)
11 Decline to do so. (3)
13 Get back in gear. (6)
15 Come naturally to sound like a kind of haircut. (6)
16 Put us in prison when we are possessive. (7)
17 Fizzes, as do all such drinks. (4)
19 It's sometimes fine to find a seaman without 21 down. (4)
20 There's a measure of badinage to this bird. (9)
21 Split peas. (4)
23 It's out of date you are, as a hillbilly might put it. (4)
26 Not hard to get a lick in when getting fed. (7)
28 See 26 down.
29 Sort of dose with a kind of shot in it. (6)
30 Detractors never do. (3)
32 Profession of hotel pages? (7)
33 Riots to get a meal in Italy. (7)
34 Disturbed, but still angered. (7)
35 Mickey Rooney's diary? (4, 3)

DOWN

1 Am above father's French, but powerful. (7)
2 Gad! Even this is when you get it! (7)
3 Citrus mixture. (6)
4 Finished the cheese up. (4)
5 Dull poet, in a way. (4)
6 There's a slight difference here. (6)
7 Blimey, is 'e the last nag? (7)
8 A sort of bun found in 19 across. (7)
12 Was the Goldilocks villain so featured? (9)
14 Why you can't do it? (Eat, perhaps!) (7)
15 Let them be gone, as I suffer them. (7)
18 Even the king sometimes yields to this. (3)
19 Is such a young maiden short? (3)
21 1 across is double-headed by such. (7)
22 No one holds this sacred. (7)
24 A piece is spoken about, in a roundabout way! (7)
25 One criticism of drawn-out conclusions? (7)
26 and 28 across. Gear in the air? (6, 6)
27 The fat comes up about a broken bone in back. (6)
30 Not a new conclusion for 34 to come to. (4)
31 Back yard. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 232

ACROSS:—1 SPRAT; 4 EVE; 6 AVAST; 9 REGIMEN; 10 ORDERLY; 11 GALLOP; 14 AROUSE; 15 MYRIADS; 16 TRAP; 17 EDIT; 19 CARRIER; 20 NICE; 22 ZERO; 24 RUBBISH; 26 STONES; 27 EASIER; 31 EMBRACE; 32 LEDGERS; 33 TIRED; 34 NAP; 35 DATES.

DOWN:—1 SPRIG; 2 REGALIA; 3 TOM-TOM; 4 ETNA; 5 ETON; 6 ADDERS; 7 AGROUND; 8 THYME; 12 PYRAMUS; 13 MICROBE; 14 ADVERSE; 16 TIN; 18 TWO; 21 CROWBAR; 23 EVIDENT; 24 REWARD; 25 HANDED; 26 SPENT; 28 ROSES; 29 NEON; 30 SLAP.

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ignorance and prejudice, I have traveled in Canada, Eire, England, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, and Poland.

I hate fascism and fascist tendencies, both abroad and in the United States. I love democracy, which means the rights and advancement of the common people. I consider it the patriotic duty of every American to fight for the things he believes in.

FLORENCE LUSCOMB

Cambridge, Mass., October 6

Aux Armes!

Dear Sirs: New York University proposes to build its new law center on Washington Square. This will necessitate the demolition of a square block of charming, century-old studios which are literary and artistic landmarks. It will mean the eviction of more than 300 persons in the midst of a critical housing shortage. Many of the tenants are serious artists who require the north light for their work. These buildings have lovely skylights and big casements, especially built for artists by "Papa" Strunsky, who renovated the buildings for artists about twenty years ago.

A year ago the Washington Square Association raised money by public subscription to finance a neighborhood survey conducted by Arthur C. Holden, architect and city planner. New York University contributed to its expense. That survey strongly advised the university to expand to the south and east of the square. The proposed site for the center violates the whole spirit of the Holden survey.

We fully appreciate the needs of N. Y. U. and its worthy objectives in building a bigger and better law school. The Washington Square-Greenwich Village community wishes to have pleasant relations with the university. However, we strenuously object to having the park appropriated as a private college campus. We oppose the destruction of one of the finest groups of studio buildings in New York while a sub-standard area exists adjacent to N. Y. U.—a blight on it and the community. People come from every part of the world to see the famous arch and look at the distinctive studio buildings, which have been the homes and workshops of John LaFarge, John Barrymore, Theodore Dreiser, and other celebrities too many to mention.

We appeal to those who love Washington Square to write to Chancellor Harry Woodburn Chase, New York University, Washington Square, New York, and ask that the university reconsider its plan before the wrecker's ax falls on this beautiful old quarter.

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